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Ginebra guns for title clincher tonight

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Democratic nominee Kerry picks Sen. John Edwards as running mate

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Experts surged 15.3% to $3.26B in May

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Presyo ng singil, bilihin: Sadya bang sabay tumataas?
WINNER 21 "TVI TEXT 2015

More obese Pinoys likely to die of heart ailments

By Blanche S. Rivera

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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'I felt betrayed'

EMOTIONAL Farewell: Social Welfare Secretary Jaime Teary-eyed Soliman dies down tell past as she her staff during her press conference in Quezon City to announce her resignation.

Teary-eyed Soliman quits as social welfare secretary to make way for De Castro

By Yvi Contreras

IN HER own admission, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman was driven from office by betrayal.

The 53-year-old co-activist, who announced her resignation yesterday to support President Macapagal-Arroyo's "political commitment" to name Vice President Noli de Castro to her post, said the "best and most principled" option left to her was to quit. She later told on TV: "I told her (the President) that I felt betrayed."

Tears—hers and her aides'—marked Soliman's announcement at a press conference in a Quezon City restaurant that she was giving up the social welfare portfolio effective Oct. 31.

"Of course, I was surprised. I did not expect it," she said to Filipinos during the open forum, when asked how she had reacted to news of her impending replacement and whether she had showed resistance in her last meeting with the Arroyo.

"Seriously—and I did tell this to (the President)—there was a sense of betrayal," Soliman said. "And she explained that I should not feel this way because it was the NSDC (National Anti-Poverty Commission) chairmanship that was discussed with the Vice President, but [that] there was a strategic reason for the [DSWD]."

She added that her resignation was "something that needs to happen from the point of view of higher authorities."

In Malacañang, Mr. Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye was hard put to explain Soliman's resignation. He said members of the Cabinet were surprised and saddened by what had happened, but refused to say that the DSWD post was a political reward for De Castro.

"This is a sad day for us. There are difficult decisions that the President has to make, and we accept the consequences of those difficult decisions," Bunye said in attending.

Asked to explain why someone known to be as hardworking as Soliman had to go, he said: "Yes, we would like

DE CASTRO with his "strong preference" for the DSWD inherits a "very professional" organization "free of politics" because "The poor have no political color, no ideology. They just want to be helped whatever their beliefs."

Civil society, Cory heap accolades on Soliman

THE REACTIONS to Corazon "Dinky" Soliman's resignation from the Department of Social Welfare and Development ranged from regret to indifference.

But former colleagues in civil society, certain senators, as well as former President Corazon Aquino, expressed sadness and were positive in their praise of her.

Rina de Venecia, one of the well-spoken parents at Soliman's press conference yesterday, said she would seek the help of her husband, Speaker Jose de Venecia, in convincing President Macapagal-Arroyo to "reconsider."

"I really mean her comes. She's a genuine good," Mr. De Venecia said of Soliman, under whose watch the DSWD spearheads projects for abandoned children and battered women together with the Congressional Spouses Foundation headed by the Speaker's wife.

Mr. De Venecia and Vice President Noli de Castro could still engage in social work as chair of the National Anti-Poverty Commis-

(STORY, A-8)

Leaders split on Cha-cha date; GMA says it's now

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christine O. Avendaño and Carlos Conde

THEY ALL say they want Charter change (Cha-cha) but the country's top leaders remained divided yesterday on when to get it done.

Now, not later, President Macapagal-Arroyo said, insisting the country might lose forever its chance to effect meaningful changes if amendments to the 17-year-old Constitution were unnecessarily delayed.

She announced her plans to convene a meeting of administration and congressional leaders in days to discuss when and how to amend the Constitution.

"I have complete faith that in that meeting, we would reach a consensus as to the time and manner of effecting change," she said in a statement.

"If we place this in the backburner for too long, it could burn out and be lost forever," she said.

The statement appeared to echo Mr. Arroyo's pronouncement in Davao on July 1, where she said she would like a parliamentary federal system of government in place at the end of her term in 2010, as part of her legacy.

But her closest foreign ally, the United States, urged caution.

Speaking to reporters, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone said Mr. Arroyo's desire to amend the Charter and shift to a parliamentary form of government is one as well as to implement fiscal reform.

"But all have to decide this through your democratic process and we can count on to back you up," Ricciardone said. "But those are serious decisions. There's risk has to be averted. We do that by dealing with it frankly, it seems to me."

Mr. Arroyo, in her statement yesterday, said Charter reform is the "country is "the greatest hope for change" and should not be postponed for too long.

"This is about getting the Philippines back in the world map and putting the Filipino people

(CONTINUED ON A-7)

Tyro solon's ouster sought

By Armand N. Nocum

DOES babies be could be formally elected in Second in Congress as the representative from Antipolo. Former Interior Secretary Rafael S. Pano is facing almost the same.

The Office of the Ombudsman yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to suspend Pano for his alleged contribution three years ago of a multimillion-peso radio deal that had soured all the parties involved, including the Philippine National Police and the government is still a great deal of loss.

(STORY, A-6)

Arroyo appoints Peruvian expert as economic adviser

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

KNOWN the world over as a "poor man's capitalist," economist Hernando de Soto, an acknowledged expert on development economics, has been tapped by President Macapagal-Arroyo as one of her top economic advisers.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo tapped De Soto, whom she hailed as "the great Latin American social scientist," because he was an authority on asset management and an exponent of the full use of idle assets, specifically the full utilization of land as collateral.

Ms Arroyo said the country needed more meaningful reforms to liberate the poor, and has asked De Soto to study how his ruling system reforms in Thailand could be applied to the Philippines.

De Soto, the namesake of the great Spanish explorer, heads the Lima-based Institute for Liberty and Democracy which advises governments on economic development and combating poverty.

He received world acclaim for his 2000 book "The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else," which proposes the granting of property rights to the "dead" assets held by the poor to help propel growth in developing countries.

The book included case studies conducted in Egypt, Mexico, Haiti

(CONTINUED ON A-8)

HERNANDO DE SOTO: "Poor man's capitalist" for his advocacy of property rights for the poor.

No takers for Reyes plan to legalize 'jueteng'

By Gil Cabacungan Jr., Christine F. Reganero, Norman Bordadora, Ma. Ronilda Tuazon, Yolanda Isabela Fuentes, Phil Members Lance Duncan and Tonette Orejas, Phil General Lauren Dyoti

VIRTUALLY no one is supporting the proposal of Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes to legalize "jueteng," but the lawmakers, not the Catholic Church hierarchy, not the Catholic Church Secretary President Macapagal-Arroyo who appointed him.

"The position of the Palace is clear. We are against the legalization of jueteng," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a statement yesterday.

The hasty clarification was issued a day after Reyes disclosed his plan, which immediately raised a furor among anti-gambling activists led by church officials.

"Isa't isa ipaglaban jueteng," the new secretary said on Monday. "This is the only way to control the illegal numbers game."

That was Reyes' "personal opinion" on which the President was not consulted, Bunye said. In fact, he added: "Soon we will pass strict anti-jueteng laws in ensuring the penalties on operators."

Bunye stressed that Mr Arroyo had consistently stood pat on her decision not to legalize the illegal numbers game, even if this could generate from P30 billion to P35 billion in additional revenue for the cash-strapped government.

Manila Archbishop Leonardo Sandoval swiftly responded to Reyes' announcement by saying that the popular numbers game was "organized crime."

Philippine National Police officials were just as vehe-

(CONTINUED ON A-7)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Easterlies will blow over Mindanao and southern Luzon while the rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

No MILF objection to war games

FILIPINO and American soldiers in joint war exercises in Zamboanga in 2003.

By TJ Burgonio

THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front sees nothing wrong with Filipinos and American troops holding joint military exercises in its territories in Mindanao as long as they do not provoke clashes with its forces.

Philippine and United States armed forces have lined up a series of counterterrorism training exercises beginning this month in areas where the MILF operates as rebels maintain camps.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said yesterday the group was confident the exercises were merely aimed at honing the antiterror skills of the local soldiers and not for anything else, like flushing out terrorists.

"We are not alarmed by this, this is just an exercise. This is not a counterterrorist training," Kabalu said in a phone interview. "Besides, we are not hiding (if Usman Manzi) are overseas."

The MILF, which has been fighting to establish an independent Islamic state for decades, has been suspected of coddling Jemaah Islamiyah (regional terror network). The JI is reportedly the Asian arm of al-Qaeda which is headed by Osama bin Laden. The MILF has consistently denied any connection.

Kabalu said that while it has no legal personality to stop the training of such troops, the MILF hoped the Filipino and American troops would not resort to any that would agitate the rebels/forces.

"As long as they will not touch our men on the ground, we don't expect clashes (to happen)," Kabalu added. "But anyway, our forces would have no recourse but to defend themselves," he said.

Kabalu also welcomed Inquirer Secretary Eduardo Ermita's pronouncement that the government would inform the MILF about the training schedules, the venues and the number of participating troops, among other data, to avoid any misunderstanding.

The exercises include Fuerza Patron 04-2, a counterterrorism and reconnaissance mission that will be held this month at Subic Bay and some areas in Mindanao, and the JOPAT Project Balikatan 04-1 that will run from July to September at the AFP's training facility in Malagutay, Zamboanga City.

A Light Infantry Battalion Training Exercise, dubbed "Balikatan Plateau," will be held this month and August at the Philippine Army's 4th Infantry Division training facility in Camsur, North Cotabato.

The MILF signed a ceasefire agreement with the government in August 2001. Both sides renewed their commitment to the agreement in July last year, according to Kabalu.

The agreement, however, has not entirely stopped skirmishes between government forces, some troops and the secessionist rebels.

Peace talks between the two sides are expected to resume in August this year in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in terms of preconditions, of negotiations. Proposals to examine talks last April were settled in view of the May 10 national elections.

The last political settlement in the area should emerge out of a peace process. We don't want a dictated formula," said Kabalu, when asked about President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration in a past conference of the peace negotiations with the MILF.

US getting impatient over slow peace

THE UNITED States expressed impatience yesterday over Muslim separatists' failure to sign a peace deal with the Philippine government, saying the delay caused the loss of some of the US$30 million in development funds for areas where the rebels operate.

US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone said Washington had to divert to unspecified areas of the funds it hoped to use to rebuild areas affected by fighting between the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the government. The money went to other US-financed development projects in the impoverished south.

"The rebels have been fighting for a separate Muslim homeland for the last three decades. Last year, a ceasefire took effect and Malaysia agreed to host peace talks and hosts a team of international observers in Mindanao, where the rebels are based. But the process has dragged on, and is not clear when the next round of talks will take place.

Ricciardone criticized the succession of MILF founder and longtime leader Hashim Salamat, who died of a heart attack last July after he pledged support for peace talks.

"We regret that his successor so far has not seized the opportunity to recognize the vision of peace and development which in his final days he described in his letter to President Arroyo," he said, referring to Salamat's posthumous "last-will-and-testament" following Salamat's death.

Another point of concern was the reported presence of militants from Jemaah Islamiyah, a regional Islamic organization that Washington says has links to al-Qaeda.

Officials suspect up to 60 mostly Indonesians are training in MILF camps. The rebels and the government have agreed to check the reports and track down suspected militants, but Ricciardone said: "We want to see more than talks... what we want to see are results."

"Beyond the talks we'd like to see Jemaah Islamiyah leave the Philippines, we'd like to see the MILF fight in a lawful way for the rights of the people they seek to represent, so it's not a revolving exercise," he said.

On Monday, Philippine defense officials announced that US forces will train Filipino soldiers in counterterrorism starting later this month in the southern town of Cotmon, over a camp of about 1,000 guerrillas.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the MILF will be notified of the maneuvers to avoid accidental encounters, and officials said the Americans will not engage in any combat operations.

Rebel spokesman Eid Kabalu said his group had no problem with the military maneuvers as long as the MILF is not attacked. He said the guerrillas don't give refuge to terrorists.

'Spike boy' on the dock in 3 venues

SPIKE Boy Lily Ebersole, the lawyer who owned up to having prepared the spike assault on hundreds of motorists last month, has been asked to appear before three Manila prosecutors on separate charges of illegal assemblies and reckless and disorderly conduct.

Manuel Lim, the leader of the pro-Better Government Crusade of the Philippines, Inc. and a disqualified candidate for the presidency, is facing charges for allegedly ordering the workers to spread metal spikes on thoroughfares around Rizal, Manila and some provinces on June 20.

Arrested and detained on June 23 on charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives, Ebersole countered his arrest on that he had ordered the planting of the metal spikes. Prosecutors had used his confession as the basis for filing charges against him.

But prosecutors said the cases will continue regardless of Ebersole's role as star witness.

Assistant city prosecutors handling three of the four cases against him at the Manila Prosecutor's Office have issued separate subpoenas for preliminary hearings.

Prosecutor Virginia Aldaz has called on Ebersole to appear before her at 2 p.m. on July 13 and July 16.

Aldaz will be handling the charge of violation of Article 153 of the Revised Penal Code, against disturbance of public order, which was filed by Senior Insp. Nieves Jimeno, chief of the Western Police District Station 6.

Aldaz, who normally holds preliminary hearings on Tuesdays in an office she becomes busy with two other prosecutors, has set a special day for Ebersole as she anticipates that many people will show up, including members of the media.

"I don't want to set it with the others because there will be too many people here and there are three of us sharing a room," Aldaz said.

Prosecutor Jessie Ong, who handles the case of violations committed behind the wheel, has scheduled preliminary hearings for July 15 and 22 at 8 a.m. Sara I. Quimosing

Sabah on agenda in RP-Malaysia talks

By Jovanie Aning

THE PHILIPPINE claim on Sabah, the settling up of a committee there and the status of Filipino migrants in the Malaysian state are some of the major topics which would be discussed in next month's Bilateral Cabinet talks between Malaysia and the Philippines.

The RP-Malaysia Joint Committee on Bilateral Cooperation meeting will be held in Manila on June 17 to 18 and established by Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert and her Malaysian counterpart Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar.

Albar, in a press conference yesterday, refused from that the setting up of a committee in Sabah would harm the Philippine claim on the Malaysian state. He said the committee would be there for the benefit of thousands of Filipinos living in Sabah, many of whom have been deported back to the Philippines when Malaysia announced its immigration rules.

A diplomatic source earlier said the secretary had ordered the updating of 1999 files on Sabah a few months ago in case the ICJC Albar defense could refute the report, although she admitted that the Sabah claim and the status of Filipino immigrants would be discussed in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Rep. Edcel Lagman and Jose Brillantes, a former ambassador to Malaysia, said the Sabah claim was not an issue of the Philippine government alone. In the 1960s, Radio Lamparo reported the country's formal claim that Sabah was part of the sultanate of Sulu.

"We can't be tackling this matter unilaterally. This is a bilateral issue, subject of continuous dialogue up to this point. It should be treated as an issue that is being 'dialogued,'" Brillantes said.

The Sabah issue had always been a crucial factor in Philippine-Malaysian relations. In 2003, President Arroyo met the Sultan of Sulu and convened an advisory body to discuss the claim.

The source said more 100 officials throughout the country should abandon its claim on Sabah.

"Many officials over there are should stop parading our claims, for all intents and purposes, they said, Sabah was our own anymore. Malaysia had made it for so many years and we owe many had the capacities to do anything about it now," the source added.

The officials added that Philippines could gain more from Malaysia if the claim was dropped, such as support for the peace process and increased development aid to Mindanao.

The source, however, maintained that no president would ever give up the country's claim to Sabah.

Sabah, or North Borneo, was originally a part of the Sultanate of Sulu until it was leased to a British trader in 1878 and later became a British protectorate in 1946. Great Britain relinquished Sabah which joined the Federal Republic of Malaysia.

President Diosdado Macapagal officially laid claim to Sabah in 1962 after the Sultan of Sulu gave the government the authority to pursue the claim. The Philippines wanted the International Court of Justice to settle the dispute while Malaysia said it should be up to the people of Sabah to determine their future.

The Philippine claim took a back seat after President Corazon Aquino assumed office. Aquino created a Philippine-Malaysia Sabah Claim Committee similarly placed the claim on the back burner to concentrate on economic reforms and regional cooperation.

In September 2002, President Macapagal-Arroyo signed an executive order reconstituting the Philippine-Malaysia Joint Advisory Council on Sabah which was formed in 1993 by Ramos but did not convene again after its initial meeting.

She also tore the reigning Sultan of Sulu, Jamalul Kiram III and his family, including Princess Tarhata Kiram, whose would do its best in protecting their promissory rights to Sabah.

Malaysia pays the heirs of the Sulu estate 6,300 ringgit, approximately $1,500, as annual rent for Sabah.

Reyes named new PAF chief

By Alexis Pupa

THE PHILIPPINE Air Force has a new commanding general.

Maj. Gen. Jose Reyes, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1975, is set to take command of the 15,000-strong PAF in ceremonies today in Villamor Air Base, Pasay City.

Reyes' assumption is held in time for the PAF's 57th anniversary today. He will succeed Maj. Gen. Avelardo Serino, PAF officer-in-charge who took over the top position when PAF chief Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan retired on May 14.

A former engineering student who joined the military, he was AFP deputy chief of company/briefing (J5) prior to his assumption as PAF chief. The ceremonies will be witnessed by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita who is also the guest of honor and speaker.

Reyes bested other contenders for the position including Maj. Gen. Edmun Galman, current AFP inspector general; Brig. Gen. Romeo Alminillo, chief of the PAF's air staff; Brig. Gen. James Hermes, PAF inspector General; Brig. Gen. Tony Ancheta, AFP deputy chief of staff for logistics (J4).

No reward, says Garcillano

By Marvin P. Mariñ

GARCILLANO

ELECTION Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano yesterday expressed surprise at allegations that he was being rewarded by Malacañang with a reappointment because of services he is supposed to have rendered in the last elections.

Garcillano, who was given a second (of several) appointment on June 30, said that he was merely doing his job as an official of the Commission on Elections and could not remain silent when his reappointment could be used as a reward.

If anything, the President lost by "more or less one million votes" in the hotelier's bigging region where he was the supervising commissioner, he said.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, who has opposed Garcillano's appointment to the poll body, alleged that Garcillano had somehow rewarded ex-President Marcos' dictator's victory and was being rewarded as a result.

"What reward is the honorable senator talking about? (the Pres. President) doesn't have to pay for anything," said Garcillano.

He said he was embarrassed by the President's defeat in the region but "if that's the mandate of the people, we cannot do anything."

Garcillano and Comelec Commissioner Manuel Barcelona, who also got a second ad interim appointment, have to get approval from the powerful congressional Commission on Appointments which is pursued them in the last Congress.

Garcillano and Barcelona were first appointed as Comelec commissioners on Feb. 10. Pimentel accused Garcillano of being involved in "flagship frauds." Considering "alarming" questions in previous elections.

"I do not know why he (Pimentel) is so upset... but we have already heard (which since 2001)," he said.

He said Pimentel's son, Aquilino Martin "Koko" Pimentel III, who ran for governor of Cagayan de Oro City, entered him frequently to discuss problems concerning the elections.

But when the younger Pimentel lost, Garcillano said the senator blamed him, accusing Garcillano of not cleaning up the voters' list in Cagayan de Oro.

Garcillano said he was not confident of getting past the CA because of Pimentel. He said the senator had been the cause of his removal from the Comelec in 1998.

'In-House' economist unveils plan to cut deficit

By Carlos Pablo

THE NEW chair of the House appropriations committee has unveiled a package of "painful policy measures" to deal with a threatening fiscal crisis.

Little Rep. Amy Salcedo has put together a plan known as the "Salcedo initiative" which is premised on a credible budget deficit reduction plan.

"This would buy time for government to meet its immediate cash flow requirements for basic operations while allowing the economy to grow," Salcedo said in his paper.

Salcedo described the plan as a comprehensive computer model on the principles of long-term planning among 40 sectors—national and local governments, government agencies and corporations, Congress, business and labor.

The proposed measures include cutting the public employee wages by 30 percent, all the unfinished government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs).

"Members of their board will forego their year-end bonuses. They will remit 100 percent of the dividends from their retained profits to the national government," Salcedo said.

Salcedo also said that the GOCCs holdings of Treasury bills and other instruments of government indebtedness, whose profits go to the consolidated operations, will also be restructured.

He said the GOCCs will be required to contribute at least P5 billion in savings by among other things, trimming the excess fat in their operations.

Legislators will also be called on to make a sacrifice by contributing to a P20 billion fund from their cash-laced appropriations to help finance the programs of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"This would mean a more limited room for cash travel projects, which would deadens basketball courts and cockfighting deals," Salcedo said.

On top of this, Congress would be asked to make a commitment to approve new tax measures "embrace measurable taxes," Salcedo said.

National government agencies will have to increase their savings to raise another P20 billion, he said.

"This would mean, among others, a moratorium on travel, training and seminars," Salcedo said.

"Service fees of supplies will also be significantly reduced," he said.

Local government units will also be asked to pitch in with another P20 billion in the form of a loan to the national government.

Salcedo said that the P20 billion loan can be sourced from the national revenue allotment (IRA) for local government units.

The business sector will also be asked to support new tax measures, especially on the so-called sin products like tobacco and alcohol-based drinks.

Humpback whales mating off Isabela

CONSERVATIONISTS yesterday reported the discovery of a new mating and breeding ground for humpback whales, an endangered species, off the shores of Isabela.

World Wide Fund for Nature said three groups have apparently found a home near the eastern coast of the province, namely the waters facing the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park.

The new find not only brings "exciting news" to scientific and conservation circles but also promises more eco-tourism attractions like the whale shark habitat in Donsol, Sorsogon, the WWF added.

It's only the second known humpback destination in the country, the first one discovered in the Babuyan Islands in 1999.

Posting 9,000 records in survey of Isabela's waters like conducted by the WWF a month ago by Jo Avelino, researchers had up to 12 encounters with humpbacks, an of which involved mothers and calf pairs.

The sightings were recorded from January to May this year in the waters surrounded by the Maconacon and Dinapigue municipalities.

"We once were able to record 40 minutes worth of their vocalizations or songs," said Avelino, WWF-based wildlife coordinator.

The leader of Isabela have something to shout about," she added, noting the humpbacks' predictable migration patterns should now be considered in the province's eco-tourism programs, especially for the annual town festivals in the MARCH.

The whales arrive in the groups during summer months in the tropical seas of Philippines, Japan, and Hawaii to mate and give birth, after which they return to the polar waters in Alaska, their main feeding ground, she explained.

The Santa Madre park is a wildlife sanctuary and, as is a known refuge for dugong and Philippine species like Bryde fins, sperm (spin sloughs, and crocodiles.

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No takers for Reyes plan to legalize 'jueteng'

Front page A1

then, we will press on with our mandate to implement anti-illegal gambling policies."

He said the fact that the PNP "initiated" vetoed anti-jueteng initiatives in January should prove that the area could be won, even if the game is deeply entrenched in Filipino culture.

Lara Bermudez, PNP Director Directorate Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. announced that he would eradicate jueteng by Christmas Day. He didn't meet his target, but claimed weeks later that he and his 114,000 policemen had "cleared" jueteng in 58 percent of the country, arrested 2,122 violators and filed cases against 288 of them.

Ebdane had enjoyed the full support of then Interior Secretary Jose Lina who had made the fight against jueteng a personal crusade.

'Next to impossible'

Former Pangasinan Rep. Amadeo Perez Jr said Reyes' proposal might be "next to impossible," based on the fact that a bill supporting such a move had been dumped three times by Congress.

Perez, now mayor of Urdaneta City, said the bill was filed during the 9th, 10th and 11th Congress (1992-93, 1995-98, 1998-2001), "but nothing happened."

He was one of the authors of the bill, he said. "The farthest we got was the committee hearing."

Sen. Francis Pangilinan promoted another angle: "If betting is legalized," he said, "the gambling syndicates that will find themselves in the losing end will simply create another game."

Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iniguez, former bishop of Jaro, Iloilo, agreed. "What will happen," he said, "is that private operators will be ordered to pave the way for state operators."

Negative stand

Lehlie Guillaro wasted no time in criticizing Reyes' proposal.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamahayag ng Pilipinas said it was contrary to public morals and "grossly inimical" to the national interest.

"Where did [Reyes] get that idea?" Fernando Hicap, Pambansang national chair, said in a statement. What the national government should do, he said, is to provide decent and high paying jobs for the people, "to take their attention away from gambling."

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo adopted a wait-and-see attitude: "We need to get a clearer fill picture of how Reyes approaches the problem before we can comment concretely."

Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales also said she was "against jueteng," but she was willing to listen if Reyes' aim was to bring financiers out in the open. However, she said, "if the legal measure is permanent, then I am against it."

A few in favor

A yearning stillness in the City of San Fernando, Pampanga. And legalizing the numbers game would relieve supervisors of the burden of having to deal with the police.

"We won't be like criminals anymore, always being chased by the police," the collector said.

Mayor Dennis Pineda of Lubao, Pampanga, was also in favor of the proposal.

"It will create employment and give revenue to the government," said Pineda.

REYES: Personal opinion

da, one of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Boy" Pineda.

Chief Supt. Eldid Querol, Central Luzon police director, believed legalizing jueteng would make the campaign against illegal gambling easier, "especially if the traditional recipients and eventually the community would receive the incentives for their own good."

Corruption diminished

Victor Rep. Jesli Lapus said corruption would likewise be diminished. "Cancellation to government development, like Mega oil, the Peoples Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.) and PCSO (Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office) would be made official," Lapus said.

Senior Supt. Angelo Serafino, Bicol police director, and Senior Supt. Wilson Vicente, Zambales police director, also said they would support legalization, provided the revenue from jueteng would go straight to government coffers.

Corrections

THE STORY "Parking fees in Baguio City scrapped" that appeared on Page A13 in yesterday's issue said the order issued by Mayor Braulio Yaranon scrapping informal Parking System Corp. from imposing penalties and fines on vehicle owners who park on city streets would be enforced today, Wednesday. This is not correct; it will be enforced beginning Thursday.

* * *

IN THE story "Hospital chief suspended" that appeared on Page A16 in the July 3 issue, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit was reported to have suspended Dr. Emmanuel Achilles, chief of the Cagayan Valley Regional Medical Center, for 60 days for alleged graft and corrupt practices. The Department of Health in Cagayan Valley said Achilles's suspension was for six months.

* * *

ON PAGE E1 of the July 5 issue, a Lifestyle book review of the unveiling (apply of former US President Bill Clinton mistaked the name of the top Filipino-American official in his administration. The correct name of the official is Macilou (not Melba) Melchiangan Hailey.

* * *

A STORY on the Second Front Page of the July 5 issue, "Gov't strives over fiscal crisis," contained the following paragraphs:

"Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin shared the same concern raised by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, a member of the Economic Monitoring Group, that Philippine bonds abroad face the prospect of being referred to 'junk bonds' because of the government's precarious financial situation.

"A bond is considered to be junk or nonfilm-value creditors think the issuer would not be able to pay the face value of the bond when it reaches maturity."

A reader said this was "utter rubbish." He consulted Barron's Financial Guide Dictionary of Finance and Investment Terms—and this is how it defines "junk bond": "A bond with a credit rating of BB or lower by rating agencies. Junk bonds are issued by companies without long track records and earnings, or those with questionable credit strength."

In other words, a junk bond may sound like a worthless investment, but it's not.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Larry Gavia, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Masangkay Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-0782/84; e-mail address gloria@inquirer.com.ph and dagohoy@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Alan Paladioza, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor and e-mail address rpaladioza@inquirer.com.ph.

DFA chief shrugs off rumors of revamp

By Jovanie Aning

THE SECRETARY of Foreign Affairs has not been spared from the swirling rumors that have been making some Cabinet members jittery.

Foreign Secretary Delia Albert yesterday said rumors that she would be replaced were speculation and she was too busy coping with her day-to-day work to deal with such stories.

"I've heard of this, six names [of possible replacements] but it's all speculation. As a career diplomat for 37 years and having served five presidents, I know that I serve at [President Macapagal-Arroyo's] pleasure. This is the only way for the Cabinet's approach it," she told reporters in her weekly press conference.

Albert said that she and the other political appointees in the DFA "are here to provide continuing professional support" to the government as diplomats. As such, she added, "it would not engage well for us to speculate on such things."

Reporters covering the DFA have heard new names being bandied about for the secretary's post—that of former DFA Undersecretary for Policy Rodolfo Severino Jr. and Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo.

While Albert was busy meeting with the foreign dignitaries who attended Mr. Arroyo's inauguration on June 30, Severino was appointed special envoy to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' annual ministerial meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, by the President.

Severino was deputy secretary general in 1998-2002. He is currently a professor at the Asian Institute of Management's Center for Development Management.

Tyro solon's ouster sought

From page A1

FUND

"Not a pure impeachment," Pulse could only mean, after Special Prosecution Officers Roberto Juanmad Rodrigues and Ma. Pamela Tirol-Abbacan filed the two-page motion in the wrangle court.

The prosecutors cited Section 11 of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, which provides that an incumbent public official facing graft charges should be suspended from office.

Pulse's case stemmed from his ouster as chair of the PNP's contract with Motorola Inc., a foreign telecommunications firm, for the purchase and partial installation of a trunked radio system.

The Ombudsman alleged that the cancellation caused "undue damage" to Motorola in terms of lost value amounting to $2,369,074.43, and to the Philippine government, through the loss, in terms of low commissions, amounting to P6 million.

"On top of these, the prosecutors said, the PNP lost about $134,000 worth of bona fide down-payment expenses, plus training and system integration services from the concerned firm. The government could lose even P20 million worth of counter-suits from the firm, they pointed out.

Suspicion

Pulse, a Cabinet official during the term of ousted President Joseph Estrada, said reporters that there was room in the case against him than the botched-up deal. He was in the news recently for his reported bid to create a new Senate bloc that would challenge the leadership of Senate boss Franklin Drilon.

He claimed that the development had something to do with his being mum about the senator's ambition in the House. The closing was "very suspicious," he said, since the Motorola case was "almost to be finished."

Pulse insisted against "backroom negotiations" over House committee chairmanships and members' slots. But, he vowed, "the interests of businessmen will always win."

Now, if he can only get in his own.

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PNP cracks down on Cavite guns

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PHILIPPINE National Police has cracked down on the Civilian Security Unit, the last private armed group in Cavite, following the bloody shootout on Monday that left two policemen and three members of the group dead.

Authorities have placed CSU members under surveillance pending the issuance of search warrants against them, according to Senior Supt. Roberto Rondez, the Cavite police director.

"We will disband this private army," Rondez said in Filipino.

During the recent elections, the PNP listed the CSU as one of four known private armed groups providing armed Cavite provincial, many of whose members are known to be gun owners.

The group, whose core consists of former and incumbent barangay officials and usually provides security for local politicians, was providing such services to Amadeo rosecoffing-or other Ambagan.

According to a PNP report, another private armed group in the province is being maintained by a vice mayor, still another is made up of former police and military officers, and a fourth group has another local mayor for its "benefactor."

Rondez said that Ambagan, whose CSU men engaged police in a shootout on Monday, was included in the PNP's list of politicians maintaining private armies.

Armed with a search warrant, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group recently raided Ambagan's home but did not find any guns, Rondez said.

The Cavite police chief said CSU men, even if they are deputized by Cavite politicians, cannot be issued firearms or be allowed to carry them.

"They can treat guns in their individual capacity but that's it," he explained.

"They can't move around like one big army with all these firearms," he said.

Such outrageous display of guns appeared to be what caused Monday's shootout.

According to investigators, SPO1 Reynaldo Saenz of the Cavite provincial public group and two other officers accosted the CSU group because the latter was seen to be in possession of high-powered firearms. The CSU men were led by SPO4 Leandro Canuteo, who is said to be a bodyguard of Ambagan.

Shortly after, Ambagan arrived and talked to Saenz and his companions, SPO1 Victorino Panes and Domingo Bawalan. Suddenly, all hell broke loose and the two groups exchanged fire.

Killed in the brief firefight were Canuteo, Saenz, Bawalan and CSU members Jesse Amparo and John Edralin Ianon.

Seized from the scene were two M203 rifle grenades, a 38-caliber revolver, six rounds of ammo for an M203, loaded magazine clips for M-16, and seven rounds of ammo for M-14—seemingly indicating that the CSU was indeed armed and dangerous.

Police have put no further charges in connection with the Monday shootout.

Besides said investigators were still waiting for the results of paraffin tests conducted on eight people, including Ambagan.

DOJ wants 'Kuratong' judge sidelined for bias

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By Philip C. Tubeza

ONCE again, the Department of Justice is at odds with Quezon City Judge Ma. Theresa Yadao.

State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco has asked Yadao to inhibit herself from the rebellion case against former police Senior Insp. Roberto Canuteta and several others in connection with the alleged attempt to assassinate Speaker Jose de Venecia and bomb government buildings and a church in Metro Manila.

This after the DOJ had asked the Supreme Court to disbar on such and declare Yadao after she dismissed the several multiple murder charges against Sen. Panfilo Lacson and 35 others in connection with the Burgos-Baleleng robbery case.

The DOJ had accused Yadao of grave ignorance of the law, manifest partiality, knowingly rendering an unjust judgment and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

In a two-page motion for reinstated to Yadao's court, Velasco said, "The undersigned prosecutor adopts the view of [the] movant motion that the presiding judge of this honorable court is not fit to continue to hold office as a judge and to judiciously determine high-profile cases such as the above cited complaint of rebellion.

"We believe the presiding judge of this honorable court is biased against the DOJ. He cannot, therefore, handle the above-entitled case with utmost impartiality. Thence, the DOJ is at great risk of once again losing a very important case before this honorable court," Velasco said.

The DOJ filed the rebellion case against Canuteta and his alleged accomplices on June 29 and it was raffled off to Yadao's court.

"It is of judicial notice that the DOJ, through Chief State Prosecutor Ledonicio Zuño, is currently at odds with the presiding judge of this honorable court in view of the manner she handled the case [against Lacson]," Velasco added.

Yadao had ruled that there was a lack of probable cause in the case against Lacson and his co-accused for the Kuratong Baleleng murders, in the third reversal of the case since 1995.

In the rebellion case, Canuteta and his accomplices were allegedly provided P 850,000 each to carry out the assassination-and bombings.

Aside from Canuteta, the accused included Dante E. Puerto, Antonio B. Mercader, Benjamin Bin, Pedi Dimaano, William Ramos, others known only as Lord, Scaggi, Joe Bindoy, Bukang Bangit, Romeo and Sultan, and several John and Jane Does. Canuteta was implicated civil security leader Linda Montano in the plot but he denied any involvement.

On June 23 and 24, bombs were found outside the Department of Interior and Local Government building in Quezon City, the Department of National Defense building inside Camp Aguinaldo, and the Senate in the Executive Village in Cubao, Rizal, on June 22 and found bomb-making materials, guns and ammunition.

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NEW HOPE FOR BARBERS

Still no resolution on Biazon

By Marvin P. Mariñ

BARBERS

HE days after affirming the proclamation of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, the Commission on Elections' First Division has yet to come out with a resolution on the case.

According to Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, the resolution regarding the questioned proclamation of Biazon had been drafted, but it has yet to be promulgated.

"The resolution had already been signed. It's now a question of getting it to the clerk of the commission for promulgation... it is ready, we are only waiting for the concurring opinion of one commissioner," Borra told reporters.

But for the camp of Sen. Robert Barbers, Borra's revelation raised more questions on Biazon's delayed proclamation.

Barbers' lawyer Jesus Belliamo said they would want to know if the resolution would be signed by members of the Comelec's First Division or by its so-called Special Division.

"If they close the resolution today, there might be some (questions) as to whether (Election Commissioner Florentino) Tuason could still vote or not because Tuason does not belong to the First Division," Belliamo said.

If the document is signed by newly appointed Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, it would also be questioned since Garcillano did not participate in the discussion. "Either way, there would be questions and the reason for (these) questions is the delay. They should have come out with (the resolution) on June 30," he added.

Unconvinced

Barbers earlier asked the Comelec to nullify the July 2 proclamation of Biazon, saying that more than 29,000 votes were not canvassed.

He said this was enough to overcome Biazon's lead of 10,089.

The case was handled by the Comelec's First Division, which was then composed of presiding Commissioner Rufino Javier, with Borra as member.

On June 30, Borra announced that Biazon's proclamation was affirmed, adding that the decision was made in the Comelec's special division which was composed of Javier, Borra and Tuason. Tuason is a member of the Comelec's Second Division and had sat in as the third member.

The announcement was immediately criticized by the camp of Barbers which filed two petitions urging the Comelec to issue a writ on division so they could file an appeal before the Supreme Court.

The National Movement for Free Elections, for its part, said that its data—although incomplete—showed that Barbers was leading when it terminated its count.

Restating Belliamo said they were willing to use Namfrel documents as supporting evidence in their appeal for reconsideration but he feels, the Namfrel announcement was "premature and uncalled for."

"They said Barbers had a margin of 15,000 when their report was only 82 percent complete. (It was) supposed to be a terminal report and submitted to the Comelec. Now Namfrel is submitting it to media?" Borra said.

Asked if the accreditation of Namfrel would be affected because of its pre-humature, Borra said that the review would be done "at the proper time."

The WORLD

Lito Lorenzo B. Salva

RUNOFF IN SEPTEMBER

Retired general wins over Megawati

JAKARTA—Indonesian voters have chosen a former Army general over incumbent Megawati Sukarnoputri in the country's first direct presidential election, but the vote will go to a runoff in September, a private poll shows.

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Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won a vote of public frustration with Megawati over corruption and poverty, though the poll results did not show him with an outright victory. Megawati and another ex-Army general, Wiranto, survive a tight race for the second spot in the runoff.

Official results from Monday's election were not expected for 10 days, and the results do not bind Tuesday they would take a closer look at ballots originally deemed invalid to see if the voter's choice could be determined, saying this process might involve millions of ballots.

Megawati came to power in 2001 after former President Abdurrahman Wahid was ousted out of office by parliament. Voters complained of her perceived aloofness and failure to improve the economy.

Yudhoyono was ahead with 33.9 percent, short of the 50 percent needed for an outright victory according to the private poll released out by the Washington-based National Democratic Institute.

YUDHOYONO

Megawati was second with 24.9 percent and Wiranto had 23.8 percent. The system predicts election results by counting about half a million vote votes from 2,336 selected voting stations.

"We thank God and the people for this," Yudhoyono's campaign manager, Rahmat Witoelar, said of his candidate's first place finish in an interview with private Metro TV. "We will enter the second round with a vote to celebrate."

Yudhoyono's campaign strategy, which emphasized his clean image and promised tough action against corruption, won demand spoiled Megawati's vote accidentally punched through the paper when it was folded in two, making it difficult to determine their choice of candidate.

"A recount could significantly affect the results," election monitor Ramdansyah Bakrie said.

Indonesia's currency strengthened and the stock market rallied before Tuesday following the presidential election, but the outlook remains cloudy because of the possibility of further political uncertainty ahead of September's runoff vote, analyst Rajat Prasad said.

Monday's vote took place one years after the ouster of longtime dictator Suharto, and was seen a key step in the transition to democracy in the world's largest Muslim country.

The results were based on 92 percent of the total number of votes compiled by the nonprofit, which is the international arm of the US Democratic Party. The poll had a margin of error of 1 percentage point. AP

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ENDANGERED SITES
The picture taken on Aug. 14, 2000 shows the cathedral of Cologne and the Deutzer Bruecke bridge. The historic cathedral, one of Europe's masterpieces of Gothic architecture, was placed on Unesco's list of World Heritage in Danger July 6. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's decision came at the ongoing second meeting of the 21-member World Heritage Committee in the ancient Chinese city of Suzhou. AP

Kerry set to name running mate

WASHINGTON—Sen. John Kerry is preparing to announce his running mate Thursday, ending a search that began with about 20 candidates and is expected to find a political soul mate who could "be ready at any moment" to assume the presidency.

The last-minute speculation centered on Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, a former Kerry rival who met secretly with the Democratic nominee-to-nothing this last week. But Kerry advisers said their boss had recently signaled his interest in other candidates, including Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri, Gov. Tom Vilsack of Iowa and Sen. Bob Graham of Florida.

Kerry and his top advisers have cleared virtually no details of their deliberations, but that hasn't stopped speculation about a long list of Democrats including retired Army Gen. Wesley Clark, Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana and Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware.

Advisers said a surprise was possible. Kerry plans to announce his choice at the vice president on the Internet before a rally in Pittsburgh.

The newly assured ticket will travel to battleground states this week, starting with Ohio and ending with the running mate's hometown, Atlanta said. The pair will be formally nominated at the Democratic National Convention, which begins in Boston on July 26.

Kerry considers the vice presidential announcement and the convention as opportunities to dominate the political news and introduce himself to voters. Bush's nominating convention begins Aug. 30.

The Massachusetts senator said early Monday he had not settled on a running mate. Later, aides said Kerry had finished up his email, and directed his staff to carry out long-ready plans to announce and promote the decision.

Casting this as a signature decision of his campaign, aides said Kerry insisted from the start on a far-reaching and secretive process, driven by considerations for the candidates. AP

AIDS spreads unchecked in Asia

BANGKOK—The AIDS epidemic is spreading unchecked throughout parts of Asia with more people infected with HIV in the region than in sub-Saharan Africa before, according to a United Nations report published on Tuesday.

Single successes in HIV infections were reported in China, Indonesia and Vietnam with the number of Asians having the AIDS causing virus rising to an estimated 7.4 million, the 2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic said.

Several states are losing ground on research and educating the public but more than 20 years since the world's first AIDS diagnosis in 1981, huge swathes of the region's population remain ignorant about the disease and how to protect themselves.

AIDS experts warn the fast-growing epidemic in Asia, with a record 1.1 million new HIV infections last year, has huge implications since the continent is home to 60 percent of the world's population.

Epidemics are particularly serious in the Southeast Asian nations of Burma, Thailand and in Cambodia where three percent of the population is infected with HIV—the highest proportion in Asia.

Despite some successes in reversing the upward trend of infection, the United Nations warns that many national leaders remain in denial about the impact of AIDS on their people. While in many countries the response of the authorities is improving, it falls well short of what is needed, the report said.

Prevention work is also failing for those on the margins of society who avoid it most—notably homosexuals, migrants and drug users—who are systematically ignored in some of Asia's most conservative societies.

Women, who accounted for 28 percent of all infections in the region, also face particular difficulties in parts of Asia where seeking health services or treatment can result in social ignorance.

"These epidemics appear to be advancing unchecked... in tightly knit societies in Europe and Asia—in areas that are experiencing the fastest-growing epidemics in the world," said the report.

While sub-Saharan Africa remains the worst hit place in the world, UNAIDS predicted that Asia would need 46 percent of an estimated $26 billion budget required by 2005 for prevention and care. Currently less than five billion dollars is spent worldwide.

China alone has an estimated 840,000 people living with HIV but the report warns that 10 million people may be infected by 2010 unless effective action is taken since it has spread across the country.

Injecting drug use is fueling the spread in some areas but in parts of central China, a blood-selling scandal designed to supplement meager incomes among the farming community in the 1990s national spread HIV and led to infections due to fill personal syringes.

In India, which at 5.1 million has the largest number of people outside of South Africa living with HIV, a study three years ago found that a quarter of the populations had never even heard of AIDS.

Although most infections were through unsafe injections, injecting drug use in the northeast of the country bordering Burma and close to the notorious Golden Triangle drug producing area saw HIV infection rates of up to 75 percent. AFP

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Q&A:

13 killed as US bombs Fallujah

FALLUJAH—Iraqi security forces and Iraqi militiamen battled insurgents in Fallujah for a second day Tuesday, as U.S. warplanes bombed suspected militant targets in the city, which has become a stronghold of resistance to the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq.

Hospital officials said 13 people were killed in the fighting and U.S. warplanes dropped bombs on the city. Iraqi security forces and militiamen loyal to Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi launched a ground assault on the city Monday, after insurgents overran a police station and killed 10 officers.

Tuesday's fighting was the most intense since the June 28 handover of sovereignty to Iraq's interim government. Iraqi officials said they hoped to avoid a repeat of the April siege of Fallujah, which ended in a stalemate after U.S. forces withdrew from the city.

Iraqi Defense Minister Hazim Shalan said Iraqi forces were in control of the city's police headquarters and were fighting to clear the rest of the city of militants. "We are not going to withdraw from Fallujah," he said.

Iraqi Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib said Iraqi forces had killed 70 militants in the fighting. He said Iraqi forces had also captured a number of militants, including Omar Hadid, a Jordanian who Iraqi officials say is a leader of Ansar al-Islam, a militant group with ties to Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network.

Mr. Naqib said Iraqi forces had also captured Abu Ali al-Afari, a cousin of Mohammed Latif, a former Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations who is now a member of Iraq's Governing Council. Mr. Naqib said Mr. Afari was suspected of financing militant groups.

Mr. Allawi's government has pledged to crush militants, but plans to announce a new security law have been delayed.

Despite fears, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said on Monday the government would soon introduce an amended security law, reinstate the death penalty and offer a temporary amnesty to Iraqi insurgents as part of efforts to curb violence.

The U.S. military and Iraqi officials have said for months that foreign fighters have played a major role in bombings and shootings, but have produced little evidence.

However, a chilling video tape, obtained by Time magazine and given to Reuters, shows foreign Muslim militants saying farewell to their loved ones before climbing into vehicles and blowing themselves up in operations across Iraq. Reuters

ORACLE BONES

One of sets of Chinese ancient oracle bones are shown at a reproduction picture from the auction catalogue of Chongyuan Art Auction House on Baoshan Shanghai, China. An anonymous bidder paid $1.2 million at auction for a 1,000 year-old set of oracle bones—relics once used by Chinese rulers to foretell the future, auctioneers said Tuesday. The bones sold at the auction Sunday date from the Shang dynasty and consist of shards of carapace shell inscribed with questions about the weather, harvests or whether to go to war. ↵

4 Palestinians, Israeli killed in West Bank battle

NABLUS, West Bank—Four Palestinians, including a university professor and his teenage son, and an elite Israeli commando were killed Tuesday in a fierce nighttime gun battle in a refugee camp in the West Bank city, Palestinian officials said. The army said...

An intense exchange of fire erupted in the Ein Beit Ilma refugee camp when an elite Israeli commando unit raided the area backed by tanks, jeeps and helicopter gunships, witnesses said. Helicopters fired four missiles. Gunmen positioned in buildings and on the street opened fire.

The Israeli commando was killed early in the operation as troops searched for fugitives, including the top two officials from the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Both were shot dead during the battle.

Troops also knocked at the door of the house of Khaled Salhab, a professor at Nablus' An-Najah University. Salhab and his 16-year-old son, Mohammed, opened the door. The soldiers fired from behind the door, killing both of them, relatives said.

The Army had no comment on the shooting, but said fighting erupted in a stellan when the Fugitives Battalion's soldiers of Nablus, apparently the same one the Salhab family lives in.

The fighting raged until after dawn. The sound of gunfire echoed throughout the city. Electricity was knocked out in the western half of Nablus. Explosions reverberated in the night, as bombs laid by Palestinian militants went off sporadically.

In the morning, soldiers continued searching the refugee camp for fugitives.

"We want to condemn this Israeli military escalation," Palestinian Cabinet minister Saeb Erekat said. "This will undermine the efforts being exerted to end the vicious cycle of violence and restart the peace process."

The fighting erupted hours before envoys of the so-called Quartet of Mideast mediators—the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia—were to meet in Jerusalem. The talks were focused on Egypt's role in the Gaza Strip following a planned Israeli withdrawal.

The Quartet backed the "road map" peace plan, which aims for an independent Palestinian state by next year. It is supporting Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza and four West Bank settlements, although it wants the withdrawals to be a step in carrying out the road map. AP

Probe of Madrid train blasts starts

MADRID—Parliament's investigation of the Madrid train bombings opened Tuesday with a solemn account of three young men wearing wool caps on a warm spring day, and with handkerchiefs covering their faces, at the site that was the starting point of the attacks.

One walked quickly toward the train carrying a bag while the other two stayed behind at a parked van. "My blood ran cold. I thought it was a robbery," Luis Gutrado, a doorman in the town of Alcala de Henares, said.

Gutrado told the commission what he told authorities on March 11. In dramatic police reconstructions that were found to contain eccentric tape anomalies from the Zarqa, detonators and those investigators of the kind used in the attack.

It was the first big break in the case.

In all, 10 backpacks stuffed with dynamite and shrapnel exploded on four crowded trains heading to Madrid during the morning rush hour, killing 190 passengers and bystanders, and wounding more than 2,000.

The attack is blamed on Islamic militants with possible ties to the international terrorist group al-Qaida.

Of 90 people arrested, 14 remain in jail including two who are believed to have put the explosives on the trains.

Gutrado, his face emotionally scrambled for security reasons on the live cable TV broadcast of the hearing, was the first of at least 30 people scheduled to testify before the 16-member committee of the Congress of Deputies.

The commission will interview witnesses and officials, and examine police documents and other material, to review what happened on March 11 and the following days. On March 14, the Popular Party was upset in elections that brought the Socialists to power. AP

Looting destroys 'cradle of civilization'

BABILON, Iraq... The last remains of some of mankind's earliest cities have virtually disappeared through rampant, deemed looting triggered by the US-led invasion of Iraq, experts said.

Lawlessness and instability have accelerated a process that started in the 1990s but has now reached critical levels, with dozens of archeological sites plundered to extinction in the past year.

And the presence of US-led troops in one of the world's most glorious ancient capitals has not helped either.

"The ancient people of Iraq, often dubbed as the cradle of civilization, are credited with inventing the wheel, writing and mathematics and developing a culture and history which has swept all through the ages.

"It's one of the major, major tragedies around the world. We have basically lost most of the ancient cities of Sumer," said Chicago-based professor McGuire Gibson, referring to one of many endless civilizations which dates back to around 3,000 BC.

"There's a culture of looting which has never been on this scale before—it's certainly unprecedented. In this last year we have lost more sites than ever before."

Gibson, who has been visiting Iraq since the 1960s, said an unsafe environment in the destructionist month was "shocked" by aerial photographs showing the destruction of sites in the months after the invasion.

"Everybody is shocked at what happened. They couldn't believe the pictures we were showing of the damage to the sites," he said, adding that "dozens" of sites had been lost.

"There are capitals of early kingdoms. It's an incredible loss," Gibson said.

Qasim Dhiat Shaibeeb, an Iraq cultural expert with the United Nations Economic and Cultural Organization, said the situation had reached a crisis point.

"After the recent war the condition of sites is really critical," she said.

"It wasn't something that was completely new but the dimensions of this process are completely unexpected."

The war has also had a direct impact on some sites.

Babylon, home of King Nebuchadnezzar, the Tower of Babel and the Hanging Gardens, is now a camp for 1,500 multinational troops.

The partly restored ancient city has been closed to visitors after Iraqi archaeologists found American marines had bulldozed a 100-sq m piece of land, above the buried remains of ancient homes, to create a shelter-post landing pad.

"You can see mounds of earth on both sides (of the landing pad) and I think it's very big damage," said Lukaas Okoshir, a resident architect employed by Polish troops now based at Babylon.

"The cuts are ancient pottery and bricks on both sides. I know they destroyed something from the ninth or seventh century BC."

The damage revelations have hastened the troops' withdrawal from the site, due by the end of the year, but Gibson rejected their argument that they were protecting Babylon from looters.

"It's like Vietnam—you have to destroy it to protect it," the professor said.

"Having an Army at right on an archaeological site is absurd. They should never have been allowed to do that."

He said Babylon's problems were just a small part of a country-wide pattern of destruction accentuated by the war and fed mainly by European dealers working with middlemen in Baghdad, Amman and Kuwait.

"You told that the world market is depressed because there's so much Iraqi stuff on the market," he said.

Unesco's Baghdad said Iraq's unrolled cultural legacy had been hard hit by the war, with the national museum losing about 15,000 items in three days of looting in April 2003.

The organization was spending $500,000 documenting what had already been lost and restore museums and libraries, listing Iraq as a top priority in the end. AFP

PRIZEWINNER Isaac Hayes during an interview inside Sun Studio during the 50th Anniversary of Music 'N' Roll Reunion Celebration in Memphis, Tennessee. —

Memphis marks birth of rock 'n roll via Elvis' first hit

MEMPHIS, Tenn.— More than 1,200 radio stations across the United States celebrated one of the defining moments in rock 'n' roll on Monday when they simultaneously played "That's All Right," a hunk-recorded exactly 50 years ago by a young truck driver called Elvis Presley.

Influential guitarist Scotty Moore, who played with the late "King of rock 'n' roll" on that track along with bass player Bill Black, kicked off the event at 11 a.m.

Moore flipped a switch on a mid-to-mid tape at the legendary Sun Studio in Presley's adopted home town. The live feed was also broadcast globally by the Sirius satellite radio network.

In attendance were such Memphis music luminaries as soul singer and songwriter Isaac Hayes, "Wooly Bully" singer Sam the Sham and long band singer Janis Tinderholder.

Memphis police estimated the crowd, which gathered for several blocks along the street in front of Sun Studio in the 90-plus degree heat, numbered between 4,000 and 5,000 people.

The playing of "That's All Right" kicked off a full day of music honoring Memphis greats and ethnic. Moore led off the live music with an all-star band featuring Presley's first drummer, D.J. Fontana, songwriter and musician Billy Swan and country musician and Elvis tribute artist Ronnie McDowell.

When asked if he had any idea that he was about to change the musical world when he walked into the studio that day 50 years ago, Moore replied, "You gotta be kiddin'. I already had a band and my only ambition was to play music."

"That's All Right," written by Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, was one of three tunes that Presley, Moore and Black recorded that day under the supervision of producer Sam Phillips. Reuters

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, July 7, 2004
14th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Hos 11:1, 3-4, 7-9, 11
Gospel: Mt 10:1-7

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over the unclean spirits to drive them out and to heal every disease and sickness.

These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon, the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, the one who would betray him.

Jesus sent these twelve on mission with the instruction: "Do not visit pagan territory and do not enter a Samaritan town. Go instead to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.

Go and proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'

Commentary:

Look at what this list of twelve said we're imagine how they looked. They were simple men, those in their speech and manners; so we today who would probably appear rugged and crude to the extreme. Brothers are the two whose mother was Jesus' foster-mother by the names and says via of all ages.

Recently I stumbled through an expensive large format book on the Treasures of the Vatican. It also showed a picture of a group of cardinals and on the following page a close up of one cardinal's gold pectoral cross and chain against his background of watered silk. We are used to witnessing such treasures, but the big word each we check. Here it is, "With both spectacle and magnificence. The gold cardinal's cross is the symbol of the "Princes of the Church", men chosen to constitute the senate of Catholicism and the potential successors of Popes." Only human only said. But O my it is a symbol of poverty and humility, not of worldly riches. Poverty can go anywhere, has valid path to a message to most places. Tomorrow's reading has something to say about carrying gold.

The Gospel calls us to poverty of spirit and poverty of life. Remember what Peter said to the cripple, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

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OPINION

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Disappointment

EDITORIAL

So early, so soon, the politics of patronage and accommodation for convenience is rearing its ugly head. First was news of the resignation of Interior Secretary Joey Lina, which was marred by insinuations that it was due to President Macapagal-Arroyo's failure to win in Laguna. Lina was tarred as governor of the province.] Next was the likely announcement that the President had reappointed Virgilio Garcillano and Emmanuel Bautidoza as election commissioners. Now comes the appointment of Vice President Noli de Castro as social welfare secretary over the protests of the incumbent Dinky Soliman.

By all accounts, the Vice President was adamant in demanding the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Similarly, Soliman was reported to be steadfast about not relinquishing a position for which she was eminently qualified, and in which she has been doing well. But in the end, it was De Castro who got what he wanted and it had political payback written all over it.

The fact that the Vice President would lust after a job, any job, was natural enough. It was his choice of an object of political lust that was lachrymose. If the DSWD were in the hands of an incompetent, then any replacement, including the Vice President, would have been welcome. But the fact is that the DSWD was in capable hands, and the Vice President lacks the training and background to make him the more desirable option for heading that department.

The fact that Soliman has been dropped to accommodate a political ally does not speak well of the chances of anyone with the best qualifications to be drafted into public service, at a time when the country needs to harness the best and the brightest to help solve its many grave problems. The President promised (and the country expected) to finally have an administration grounded in being a meritocracy that edited we are witnessing is the same obsession with turf and political spoils.

We do not begrudge the Vice President for wanting to make an impact on the lives of his most constituency but he was also expected to be a team player. Previous suggestions that he head the National Anti-Poverty Commission made sense, and fit into the President's manifest desire to avail of his services as the chief commentator of the administration. His insistence on this one particular Cabinet portfolio exposed him to be just as selfish and self-serving as any small-time politician. His successful grab at the DSWD leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

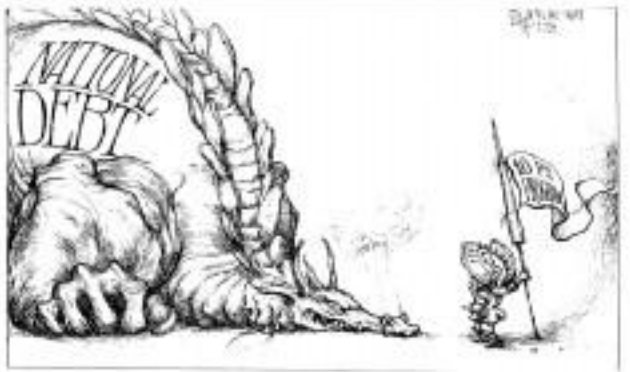
Almost as bad and ill-advised was the reappointment of two clearly disliked (by the public) Comelec commissioners, in a manner that was obviously premeditated but done almost on the sly. Their reappointment was announced almost as an afterthought—and yet it was dated June 30, the very same day Mr. Arroyo issued what was meant to be a clarion call for electoral reform. But what reforms can the nation expect, when the reformists are out from the same, old, tired, suspicious cloth?

The President may be motivated by an idealistic desire to afford her appointees the opportunity to prove their critics wrong. We wonder, however, at the wisdom of blowing away previous political capital on appointments guaranteed to raise the hackles of the opposition. Single-handedly, she has extinguished all hope of a honeymoon with the media, and even more so, of any sort of truce with the opposition. Regardless of whether the main opposition contender, Fernando Poe Jr., finally decides—or doesn't decide—to file an electoral protest, the leading politicians of the opposition now have a cause around which to rally against the President.

Certainly, Mr. Arroyo has the numbers to ram her appointments through Congress. If she isn't motivated by a naïve notion that the discredited can be rehabilitated, then is she perhaps going ahead with these appointments out of a bullying desire to simply get her way? And if so, doesn't this betray a dangerous streak of slobdobism that will spread the sense of disquiet already being aroused by Speaker Jose de Venecia's typically overenthusiastic suggestion of making her a Marcosian president-cum-prime minister?

Mr. Arroyo has been described as a complex political animal. But not even her most distractors may have expected her to be so thoroughly so, so soon.

There is only one word to describe what the public feels about the President's appointments. And it is the title of this editorial.



Put Cha-cha on the back burner

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SOME 2,000 priests and 100 bishops of the Catholic Church are currently meeting at the World Trade Center in Pasay City, the largest such gathering and the first ever to convene here in the Philippines. One of the purposes is obviously to declare controversies that have haunted the Philippine Church recently, such as the sexual peccadillos of a few members of the clergy, as well as the declining number of Filipinos entering the seminary. It is hoped that this Congress will recharge the clergy and lead to a renewed interest in the Church by, as well as the renewed vocations to religious ministry.

While there's meeting, six priests and bishops were involved in a new controversy involving illegal logging in the mountains of Mt. Cetacean, which is the source of the drinking water of the residents in Quezon City.

The first was 10 years old and so big it needed less adroit with armed bands to subdue its work. The priests of Mt. Carmel decided to drill a 15-gun way to a nearby river to provide an alternative source of water from which to quarry it. The contractor can be subjected to include it in the plans. In fact, that is how the drive to subdue the mountain's resources came to be plans. An architect doesn't have to be a Frank Lloyd Wright to know this.

Besides, what's easy to mush among men for the protection of the environment—not with, Shoulder! Is he the priests who should teach people to love God's creatures? Who is, as Aquila Kitkat wrote, "Only God can make a tree."

Furthermore, there is a law that says you cannot cut a tree without a permit from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, even if it is in your own property. This is in keeping with the worldwide effort to protect the environment. Shouldn't leading priests be taught to love the environment and obey the laws?

In spite of the appeal of their petitioners, the priests were denied and killed the tree. In fact, they invited the tree-cutting to close the protestors would be hated with a fun accomplished.

Now the tree is dead, a beautiful creature of God, killed. It would have made an interesting subject for a photography contest or for a class of the fifth of a seminary. What a waste. It is a tragedy not only to the tree and the environment, but more so to the young seminarians learning to love good bodies by God, and to the public image of the Church and the clergy.

I think the National Congress of the Clergy should pass a resolution that henceforth all members of the clergy should love and respect the environment and all the creatures that are in it.

* * *

Senate President Drilon Drilon is right when he says that the more urgent things that face before wasting time and money on amending the Constitution. The government is almost bankrupt; it has already borrowed beyond, (sense), of the payroll of some government offices, an election for delegates to a Constitutional Convention and (appetite for the convention must) will entail another billions of pesos. Where will we get the money? And even if we have it, it is more urgently needed elsewhere.

We can amend the Constitution, yes, but only what we can already afford it. Changing the Constitution and the system of government is not that urgent. It is being pushed by members of the House of Representatives only because of the ambitions of their men. And it is being rushed because he is operating old. He wants to be chief executive before he takes off into the sunset. He knows he can never be elected president. So he will settle for the next best thing, the prime ministership. If he can't fulfill his ambition through the front door, he will do it through the back door.

We urge Senate, congressmen must a constituent assembly to do the amendments in the Constitution. But don't the most disinterested proposal of all. The amendments recommended by a composed of the previous congressmen and senators. And we already know what they can do.

Allowing them to amend the Charter is like throwing open a candy store to a child to bolt. It is like making the Mafia run the government. The complacement ate them for their own selfish interests. They will amend the Constitution to benefit themselves.

The first thing they'll do is remove term limits. They will remove the provision against political dynasties. They will change the system of government to a parliamentary one. And they will be the members of parliament. They will be the heads and masters of all Filipinos. They will be honorable in the posh hartid ocean. They will become "elder" nobles. They will make a bloody mess of society.

The present Constitution is not perfect, true. But having the incumbent congressmen monkey around with it would make it much worse. It would be better off with what we have, no matter how imperfect it may be.

Because there cannot be a constituent assembly without the same congressmen as the Senate, Sultan Bgd. Gilbert Teodoro (on previous) referendum is only the people if they want to amend the Constitution or not. That is a give to get around the opposition of the Senate.

At first blush, it appears like a fair proposition: let the people decide. But this is a banana republic. Much of the people don't understand all this bullshitting about the Constitution, and the politicians are confident they can bamboozle the people into voting for it. They have done it many times before, they confidently can again.

A referendum costs more money and that's what we don't have, we don't even have any for the basic necessities.

Let's put cha-cha on the back burner. Time does not run out. We can revive it first before Cha-cha. If we become totally bankrupt and our economy collapses, there would not be any more need for a Constitution.

Power

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I CAN'T understand the surprise. Edcel Lagman said she would, but he's a consistent President has has decided she would finish her term as President anyway? Why in God's name should that surprise anyone? The only surprise is that anyone should believe it.

The way GMA's term began (three and a half years ago is exactly the way her term has begun (more with the proclamation of her assumption of power after her term ends. That is what all this talk of changing the Constitution means. The Commission calls for a shift into a parliamentary system. When that happens, GMA gets another chance to run again, this time for prime minister.

At the very least, what is wrong with that is that it's going to start the term six years later. I just said it is going to start the term as it began when happened during the last three and a half years. Everyone was complaining that the country had fallen into the rut of "too much politics," nothing was being done, everyone was at each other's throats. That is exactly what happened because people took their cue from the President. GMA was the first politician President who could run again, and she did not hesitate to take her chance to do that in respect. She was campaigning from Day One. That drove her rivals to campaign early as well, which was what made for "too much politics."

The done isn't due to EDSA after 2010, that's what's going to happen all over again. Nothing will get done, everyone will be busy campaigning over the next six years.

I did say it is going to change that by the last election reminded me of 1969 when Ferdinand Marcos ran for reelection and beat all the rules, employing guns, guns and gold to a resolving degree, to become the first (and last) "Filipino president to win a second term. Most of us see what Marcos was busy contemplating ways to remain in office after 1973 (the presidential term then, following the US model), was first years, and his "constitutional." The way Marcos's second term, employing in lieu of the "three Cs" the "three Ms" (as Newton Morado put it)—money, machinery, military, Manila, the

[redacted]

and voting. With Abalos there, we can take on it have 99 percent of population agreeing or what GMA wants.

That is the reason I have warned since a reelection journey of Charter change after warning sense it is the pay. In the very least, it misses the point altogether. Whether we have a president or a prime minister doesn't matter at all when we do not have an electoral body that can assure that the will of the voters is declared. Maybe Lito wrote the last election, maybe not, but the only terms were the peace of knowing the public will accept it without contention. The fact that the election were supervised by a Comelec that everyone supposed to distrust—no, that was designed, constructed and engineered to distrust—will haunt her till the end of her days. It will haunt her even more if she thinks she can use her control of the Comelec to engineer another victory. Abalos knows, we can take on it have 99 percent of population agreeing or what GMA wants.

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Unwelcome diversion

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

[illegible] ...ment that drew on the book of the martyr-tyrant but it was [illegible] by the government of Iron Mac[illegible] terror, a sensible line developed to inform the process of amending the 1987 Constitution to shift to parliamentary system.

The first real jump-start to that [illegible] days after the inauguration, by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile with a bill calling for the election of delegates to a constitutional convention in May now [illegible] Palawan Rep. Abraham B. Mitra followed suit with a similar bill.

The bills, tabled [illegible] before the new government could move in one on the Filipino economic and social agenda outlined by the President in her inaugural speech, hijacked the focus of the new presidency toward a controversial change in the rules of the game for someone with the administration's economic concerns, following a deeply divisive presidential election. The question is, can the ultimate [illegible] afford such a diversion? It is opposed in principle by many who [illegible] the constitutional question now before the new administration could [illegible] to [illegible] 2004 elections.

Enrile, who [illegible] Senate President Manuel Villar and Senator Pimentel, the leaders of the three-fourths majority, are the principal [illegible].

The fact that Perlas, a member of the three-fourths majority, [illegible] administration coalition started the ball rolling in the House of Congress indicates trends in party discipline and cohesion of the two major party in terms of their priorities. The Gloria administration immediately [illegible] debates over the two bills to change the Charter or to amend the constitution or a constitutional convention; and whether President Arroyo became a lame duck President by the middle of her six-year term. Pimentel made the more aggressively ambitious preemptive [illegible] that caused much [illegible] both authorities. This is [illegible] that he was acting like as a lame duck, another example of the way syndrome affecting senators. It also reflects the lack of coordination in the majority coalition on important economic and political policy issues and even [illegible] priorities.

The coalition's opening of this constitutional debate is certain to ignite a flare of complaints and [illegible] rather than leveraging to [illegible] the economic agenda of the new government from the economic priorities declared by the President's 10-point agenda. An introduction is a case of bad timing. It comes as government economic managers were preparing to hold [illegible] an urgent meeting to meet a fiscal crisis. The economic managers are reeling from [illegible] over quick-results measures to raise taxes and avoid falling deeper in debt over the next six to 18 months. Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said the President sets the budget deficit as a "serious problem," and plans to [illegible] the highest priority during the first Cabinet meeting after the inauguration.

The introduction of the constitutional change issue drives an early discharge in the ranks of the seven majority Senate President Franklin Drilon denies [illegible] the enthusiasm of the Speaker and Pimentel to jump into the fast lane of Cha-cha. Drilon warned that this is not the time to start the process of constituent change. It is [illegible] constitutional change on top of the agenda would cause "more uncertainty and instability." As his [illegible] he said, the country needs political stability [illegible] and going through an election that had caused much uncertainty. He said that the Cha-cha issue was creating mixed signals that blur the focus set by the President on the fiscal deficit.

Dr. Venicio A. Tan [illegible] from reasoning when he contends that the 10-point agenda does not compete with the issue of Charter change. He does not tell us how the President can deliver on the programs while her [illegible] is divided between the framing of a new constitution and delivering results.

With this clash of priorities, the new majority does not need an opposition [illegible] to start a spat. The important issue raised by the Cha-cha initiatives is not whether change is desirable but what is the best time to launch the project. Calling out the electorate in the middle of economic interventions may pose [illegible] direct attention from the implementation of the 10-point agenda. This constituent do not allow the President to [illegible] the agenda by mid-term even as the one up the trimester of the parliamentary [illegible].

The Cha-cha project points to the role the President's leadership of her winning coalition and her ability to get her priorities done. She has to reach the whip in the party not at the very beginning of the term, but at the [illegible] of the Cha-cha project. Se Arroyo has given her the [illegible] of dominoes using what is [illegible] to her constitutional change to her economic agenda.

Already signs that the country is being distracted by a political exercise away from its economic concerns are spreading from the political arena to the mass media. The media have begun to be [illegible] with the [illegible] of many constitutional change, replacing the last election as the enemy of the debate. The fiscal deficit and the question of regaining economic growth are being [illegible] by the heightened [illegible] of the media's fascination with new political issues. With the media's continuing love affair with politics, the political center has found an ally in finding a consensus driven over Drilon's dodges as to the [illegible] of economic control.

Political expediency

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

UNLIKE in the heady days soon after Edsa One, when [illegible] and other [illegible] Americans, especially those from civil society, no longer [illegible] no more illusions about her. Three years after they helped pave the way for her [illegible] of the presidency, they know enough about her [illegible] and governance to have [illegible] of the quintessential politician. Though she may have said all the right things about empowering the people and reforming the government, it became clear soon enough that she was more interested in [illegible] and maintaining an immoral mandate for the highest office.

Still, despite discovering her real nature, there were those from the NGO community who chose to remain in the Cabinet, realizing that government is where the real [illegible] are and that to reach and help many, much more people than they could through their own small organizations. One of those was Dinky Soliman, who coordinated the civil society efforts at the height of the anti-Erap campaign and was named Social Welfare and Development secretary. She was immediately approved when, during the first few [illegible] she praised after taking her oath, Ms. Arroyo announced that her first Cabinet appointment would be Chief of an Armed [illegible] instead of Social Welfare and Development. To those who interpreted the announcement was, the President was somewhat [illegible] "would surely [illegible] start" when she heard about it. In fact, it would [illegible] Dinky a few more months with the family [illegible] before she [illegible] to issue her "marching order" of decades of NGO work and prepping her public service as a member of the Cabinet.

I don't know if Dinky left off her chair Monday afternoon, when she handed her letter of resignation over to the President. But she was certainly taken aback by the President's reaction, which was a swift and terse: "Thank you for understanding, Dinky," with barely a pause [illegible].

* * *

WHILE she was among the most visible and vocal [illegible] who resigned from the President's administration, other Cabinet [illegible] have been an easy one for Dinky, as I gathered from comments of her friends and others in the NGO community.

THERE must be something interesting in our history or maybe it is the crazy way I see it that [illegible] of anniversaries, celebrations of [illegible] and dramas recently [illegible] the decisions now [illegible] behind us. Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo, [illegible] both members and the press to make or break her 10-point agenda, people often ask, every single hour I see the [illegible]. At this point, I [illegible] they invited me to [illegible] this [illegible] with the past.

Perhaps social planners would be better off [illegible] Rizalian [illegible] with her choice [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Magnanimity is key to unity

PERHAPS, President Macapagal-Arroyo can pursue her new mandate with a heavy dose of magnanimity. Her oft-repeated call for "national unity" and "reconciliation" can be made the cornerstone of her leadership.

To find a magical, pleasing solution to the ills besetting our nation, she should appoint competent individuals to the policy-making agencies of our government, regardless of their political persuasions and affiliations.

Even those who opposed her campaign to topple her predecessor, should be enlisted for the sake of nation-building.

The building of government is a very precise & exquisite bridal & fundamentally a flawed character and can only lead our country further down the road of destruction.

Perhaps, as small as she is in the belly of the strong balanced members, Mr Arroyo can grant those presidential pardon.

If she knows she can stop me & her present commitment is twisted wrong, she may be committed as a truly great leader historical enough to use to the hallmark of her leadership, which she can wear proudly as her decree to the time as pres. There she need not have to grant favors to politicians to stay in power.

Mr Arroyo has just announced that she is forming a commission composed of leading Filipino economists. The main goal is to jump-start our economy. We also disclosed that she would generate 1 to 1.5 million jobs. Just like and daughter re-electing for countless members, Mr Arroyo should appoint her own partisan businessmen, i.e. cronies known and to ignored economists even from the opposition.

But if she thinks Philippine politics is all about accommodating those to whom she owes but to election, one must to her as our leader may we be seriously breached.

—PATRICIA M. MARCH
New York City, USA

Put a stop to dumping and unfair competition

We are seriously concerned about the ongoing agricultural negotiations leading up to the July deadline for an agreement on a new World Trade Organization framework for agriculture liberalization.

Having closely followed the negotiations, we are afraid that there might be a lack of balance among the "three pillars" of agricultural rules—market access, export subsidies and domestic support—in the July framework. The imbalances would make the framework inconsistent with the mandate of the Doha Agenda, which specifically calls for "substantial" gains in the three pillars. They would also undermine the Doha Development's commitment to sustainable development.

We say this because the current areas of the negotiations suggest that developing countries will be asked to agree to further liberalize their agricultural markets without any assurance that export dumping will end. This unbalanced approach to poverty development for the poor farmers in the face would of trade liberalization (like Uruguay Round) was being implemented. Thousands of farmers, many of them among the world's poorest, face daily livelihood as a result of dumping and unfair competition.

We therefore call on the negotiators to adhere to the following principles:

Export subsidies or prices less than the cost of production must end. All exports and policies that contribute to the dumping of agricultural products must be identified and targeted for elimination.

Measures that transparently and effectively support rural development and environmental protection must be allowed. Developing countries should not be asked to further open their markets until dumping is effectively put to stop.

Trade liberalization and the opening up of markets have not made for better living standards. In reaction to this experience, developing countries declared in the recent Cancun talks in San Paulo on the need to pursue appropriate development policies that are outside the one-size-fits-all market opening mode.

Final commitments—to expect the third country and rural impoverishment needs of developing countries—must take precedence over the market access interests of commercial enterprises. A new agriculture agreement must therefore allow for policy space that goes well beyond the limited "special products" and "special safeguards" concepts.

We call on all WTO members to promote actively the inclusion of these principles in a reformed agriculture agreement that focuses on ending dumping and allowing countries to implement agricultural policies in tandem with their sustainable development goals.

—SEVERINO G. GARCIA,
Executive Vice Global Trade Philippine Programme Caritas Other International Relief, Suite 2309 Rockwell Plaza, 179 Buendia Ave., Legaspi Village, Quezon City

LETTERS

GMA is no bogus President

I READ the Inquirer daily. For me, it's the best daily broadsheet.

But in Neal Cruz's June 16 column, he wrote: "But kids these days are not stupid and people will believe that GMA did steal the presidency from FPJ as she did earlier from him (she dared deny that GMA will then land in the Guinness Book of World Records as having stolen the presidency not only once but twice."

Is that how vile a thief the present Philippine President can be? When most people know in their hearts Macapagal-Arroyo was elected, as the Philippine President by no other than the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court after it was counted first-hand?

And in the July 11 issue of the Inquirer, I came across the column of Rosalyn Mendiola on President Arroyo, specifically that paragraph which read: "Otherwise, she will land in the basement of history as the PGO who grabbed the presidency from the most and stole it from another book of three high school dropouts. That is a line worse than being the shortest."

Isn't that funny knowing that Mr Arroyo was the vice president when he ascended to the presidency replacing Estrada and privilege to the opposition to just anybody they want remember?

If the opposition has evidence or prove election cheating, why did it lawyers walk out? Can anyone KO a video by running away from it?

Can't the citizens just delete or avoid printing "Erap" or "Impeachment" when the opposition is out on the head of a nation because those words are more people's mind which describing history or previous denial due to non-guilty?

—R. SABIDO,
Malibay, Pasay City

More questions for Meralco and for Napocor, too

FOUR editorials of June 12 ("Television Republic") was very revealing and symbolic of the television commercial revolutionary to the power crisis, coming as it did on Philippine Independence Day. It made more evil Bonifacio's revenge.

But unlike the Supreme Court for its decision to shoot down the provisional increase which was granted without due process and in abuse of the Energy Regulatory Commission's authority. But we also accept the reality that consumers have not only the rights but also the obligation to challenge, based on industry studies, the claims and allegations of the utilities.

An informed and militant consumer sector, an activist judiciary, a committed executive department and a responsible industry are the necessary elements to make the power sector work and grow. Before we get to that, however, Meralco must explain the following:

1. Why does it have power from its IPPs at P4.23 per kWh when the National Power Corp. can supply the power for P2.12 per kWh?

2. Why must Meralco, in connivance with Napocor, pass on to consumers the P20 billion penalty it must pay for merging as no 10-year power supply contract with Napocor? Without having to agree to or condone Meralco's buying expensive power from a super-inflated generation company at the very least, Meralco should get the supplies of equitable electricity like Lopez-owned companies or pay for the penalty. After all, they are the clear beneficiaries of the set-up that drove the penalty, not the captive Meralco consumers.

3. Where did the P20 billion overcharge for 2003, as claimed by Meralco chair Jose Peter Melchor, go? Appearing as witness for the National Association of Electric Consumers at the ERC hearing, Emilio presented proof of this overcharge that Meralco has not disputed up to now.

These are just a few of the many issues Meralco, as the dominant market player, must clarify.

The Supreme Court decision has clearly ordered that there must be many utility rates regular and justly to the full satisfaction of the captive customers, many consumers fear it is going to make them worse.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will soon personally be appointing a new energy secretary. Let's hope she picks a fair-minded and a discerning regulator who will have the head to sort out the industry's conflicting interests and the heart to don't let the consumers' welfare.

—PETE L. BAGAS,
president,
National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Naconer),
Unit 14 Roman Penthouse Gardens, Roman Boulevard, Pasay City

Distorted Philippine history

I HAVE followed Conrad de Quiros' writings. Impressed with his views, I fully support most of them. However, in his previous columns (on June 23 and 25, I wonder if it is really the desire of "forgetting" or "remembering" that is the root cause of Philippines ills?)

To answer this question, may I refer to Glenn Anthony's observation "A Nation Marooned." One person's sensitive issues of "wanting" rights because Filipinos are a people who have not yet developed a clear understanding of the true history of the Philippines, which has been significantly distorted by so-called great Filipino historians. Ignorant of our history we are a nation bereft of ethical principles and morality.

—JESS DIAZ,
44 Market St., Sydney, Australia,
jessdiaz@ozemail.com.au

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bautista
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

In Baguio, it rains in the mall

By Vincent Cabreza
Baguio City

THE FIRST shopping mall in the country to open up on nature because one of its casualties last week when Typhoon "Ignac" severely struck Northern Luzon.

SM Prime Holdings Inc.'s SM City Baguio had to deal with a virtual waterfall that crashed down to its main shopping and promenade level on the facility's upper ground floor, where its uniquely designed roof failed to block Ignac's torrential rains and strong winds.

Instead of the prefabricated concrete roof that are common to shopping malls, SM's main roof for the Baguio mall is made up of five overlapping skylight canopies (similar to huge overlapping tents) that are made from imported aluminum lattice.

The canopies are arranged in such a way that both sunlight and strong breezes reach the promenade area on the ground floor.

Jose Sian Ling, architect of SM senior vice[illegible] who built wide promenade verandas on each level where people can enjoy some of the best views of the city and a host of architects, who is unmoved with Sian Ling.

In a statement, Shopping Center Management Corp. (SCMC), which supervises all SM malls, said "corrective measures are being done with regard to drainage work to be able to handle extremely strong typhoons and rains."

"We are doing our best to be able to serve our customers and tenants better," it said.

Leo Bernardino, city engineer, said they had tried to discourage Sy Kim's pursuing an architectural design that capitalized on Baguio's cool climate.

Excellent design

"This is an excellent design. It offers [tourists] a view of what is very good about Baguio. This is the City of Pines where it's related to the climate. But a different design. It took Jilian Ling[illegible]to convince him [to] a source said.

Bernardino suggested that the design follow the prescription of any of its critics. Wigan de Guia, a former city mayor, who is crusading for the preservation of the city, is unwilling to a fetish obtained by the business.

UTILITY workers of SM City Baguio reap the drenched third floor of the mall at the height of Typhoon "Ignac's" onslaught. [illegible]

De Guia had been suspicious of SM's entry into Baguio because the latter's [illegible] "shopping like mall" would change the landscape.

She was elated when Sian Ling partnered the mall and the tenants, but after the Baguio tea terrazza.

But it was the wonder that finally convinced by to approve the unique design, the source said. The design cut on conditioning cost by half, the source added.

"It was unfortunate that despite its fantastic design, it did not stand by [illegible]," he said.

The mall is located on top of Luneta Hill, which overlooks the downtown area.

"From that height alone, it would have been vulnerable to high winds. Baguio's rain fall ordinarily because of the assumed wind acceleration. We are, after all, the highest city in the country," [illegible] said.

Sian Ling installed [illegible] glass gates around the [illegible] patios to address the rains. An SM official said all of the panels were checked by the glass gates, except for the second floor.

But the waterfalls fell not anticipate the intensity of Ignac's rains, which poured down the open skylight canopies and onto the ground floor.

Several mall keepers said they were caught off guard, although all of their wares assisted by SM management that the glass gates alone would be sufficient to hold off entering weather.

The rains thrashed at least 20 shops. SM City Baguio declined to provide details about the damages.

De Guia, in her column in the local weekly Baguio Midland Courier on July 4, described her trip to the "mall in the rain" as Ignac was raging.

Mini waterfall

"It was a sight. People had umbrellas and raincoats," De Guia said. "Since from the [illegible] one office was seeping through the iron grills and falling down. This looked like a mini waterfall."

An employee of Bilo's "[illegible] complained that was all we or touched their shop. The situation was aggravated by water in the ceiling, where water started.

"We asked [the] management if they can shoulder the repair cost, but we were told that they would do repairs charged against our insurance," the store manager said.

Where hit was the Baguio Pet Hotel, which affected nearly Mouse, a dove rolling material in armatures.

SM City Baguio compensated by setting up sandbags around the shops. Floor crew went on a 24-hour cleanup duty siphoning off water.

The typhoon did not discourage people from flocking to the mall. Many actually found the "SM waterfall" an amusing sight and people walked through the mall with their open umbrellas.

"We can still save the design. I was thinking of building another level of lobby roofing that would serve all of the canopies, since that is the only aspect open in SM's nature design. We [illegible] to sensitive (3) to shoulder the expensive solution," the source said.

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VICTORIA LOUISE GOMEZ
Philippine Daily Inquirer
7th floor, PDI Building
Railroad cor. Geonzon St.
Sta. Mesa, Manila
Tel. No. (02) 896-6000 loc. 3301
Fax No. (02) 896-6160
E-mail: vlg_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

VICTORIA LOUISE GOMEZ
Philippine Daily Inquirer
7th floor, PDI Building
Railroad cor. Geonzon St.
Sta. Mesa, Manila
Tel. No. (02) 896-6000 loc. 3301
Fax No. (02) 896-6160
E-mail: vlg_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION

E-mail: pi_nation@inquirer.com.ph
DMS Feedback: inquirer.net community message to 2327 (globe/smart/sun customers)
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

LOUIS BACANI
Philippine Daily Inquirer
7th Floor, PDI Building
Railroad cor. Geonzon St.
Sta. Mesa, Manila
Tel. No. (02) 896-6000 loc. 3301
Fax No. (02) 896-6160
E-mail: pdi_nation@inquirer.net

MARIA TERESA MONTEMAYOR
Philippine Daily Inquirer
7th Floor, PDI Building
Railroad cor. Geonzon St.
Sta. Mesa, Manila
Tel. No. (02) 896-6000 loc. 3301
Fax No. (02) 896-6160
E-mail: vlg_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

Gov silence on 'jueteng' elicits jokes from workers

BISOCLAN CITY—In his first flag ceremony speech Monday morning, newly installed Basilan Gov. Wahiden Sinsuat tried to put on an image of a real "Tausug" (macho) when he gave an ultimatum to the police to curb the drug problem, but the employees were chuckling and giggling to themselves, saying "bawa ulmot jueteng (illegal numbers game)."

"I am giving police provincial director Rodolfo Magdiwa only six months to stop the drug problem in Basilan," Sinsuat said in his speech.

But down the ranks of the capitol employees, a new Sinsuat joke was going around. "How about jueteng? Is it forbidden to stop jueteng? He could stop jueteng anytime he wants to," a female employee said.

The female employee, who requested anonymity, said that she was very tempted to ask the jueteng question but her department head told her to shut up.

"... he wants the drug problem to stop, but he forgot that illegal gambling is also a problem," the female employee said. "It seems that jueteng will never have a chance to stop now."

A female supervisor based here in the division said she also endured her staff members, who were laughing at that time, to shut up.

"No matter what the appreciation of our new governor is, he's misinformed. He is a new governor and that he deserves our respect," the department head, who also requested anonymity, said.

In an interview with Sinsuat, he said he didn't forget jueteng.

"I have a schedule to talk to all the town and city mayors to discuss in them how and why jueteng should stop in their respective towns and cities," Sinsuat said.

Indeed if he thought the mayors were the ones operating the jueteng in towns and cities, Sinsuat defended the mayors.

"The mayors are not jueteng operators. I just need to talk to them to stop jueteng because they have the votes in full capacity to go down to the barangay level and from there, stop jueteng from its roots," Sinsuat said.

According to Sinsuat, the meeting with the mayors will be scheduled soon.

The governor tried to crack police chief Magdiwa but he never answered his cell phone from Monday to Tuesday morning. Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

W. Visayas employers reject wage demand, offer ₱10 allowance hike

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Employers in Iloilo and Negros Occidental are offering a ₱9-P10 increase in daily cost of living allowances (Cola) to workers instead of a P65-P200 increase in wages being demanded by workers.

Representatives of employers' groups that attended a public consultation of the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board (RTWPB) here yesterday said a substantial increase in wages would have business firms to shut down or lay off workers.

They said they acknowledge the difficult plight of workers but wage increases would be counter-productive.

Maria Lee Lara, executive director of The Iloilo Business Club, said the successive increases in oil prices have increased the cost of production and distribution of business firms forcing them to tighten expenses.

Lawyer Gil Marti Alba, spokesperson of the Iloilo Multi-Sectoral Business Organization Inc., said the amount demanded by labor groups was "exorbitant and unbearable." He said wage increases would only trigger inflation.

But labor groups said they need a substantial increase for their families to survive.

"Ang gani hinos ma [That's our own idea]," said Jose Bongat, chair of the militant Ekonang Mayo Uno (EMU) in Panay, referring to the offer of employers.

The EMU, Amalgamated and the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino boycotted the consultation and held separate rallies in front of the Residence Hotel where the meeting was held.

Marjolina Bello, a hospital aide who was among the protesters, said her monthly take home pay of around P5,000 is not enough to pay for her children's school allowance and transportation fare.

Nelson Isles Jr. of the Negros Occidental Congress of the Philippines and Small Alliance for Wage Increase, have submitted separate petitions asking for an across-the-board increase in the daily minimum wage for workers ranging from P65 to P200.

The RTWPB is pushing for a P125 legislated and across-the-board increase in the daily minimum wage. Bongat said the regional wage boards should be abolished because "it has historically stood against workers' interest."

The board in Western Visayas has consolidated a P20 increase in the Cola of workers but this was also condemned by labor groups as too small and insignificant.

The board, chaired by the regional director of the Department of Labor and Employment, is composed of seven members including two representatives each from labor and management. The other members are the regional directors of the Department of Trade and Industry and the National Economic Development Authority.

The last wage increase in Western Visayas was implemented on Jan. 16, 2002. The minimum daily wage in the region stands at P190 for workers in the sugar industry; P180 for nonagricultural activities and P160 for workers in the agriculture and retail trade.

RALANGGYM crocodiles prepare for a ritual for good harvest.

Rice terraces giving way to vegetable farms

By BV Espiritu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TINOC, Ifugao—Hapao, Dulao Alawin claims she is 100 years old but her fading eyesight is now a hard sell to any of this town's rice sorcerers.

Since 1997, the once lush sloping Ifugao forests and rice watershed that protected some of the scenic rice-clad terraces here have been cleared to pave the way for vegetable trade, fabricated by foreigners' harvests.

The town's baton cover has been sacrificed in favor of modern farm technology.

Ifugao traders have so far recognized only the smallest of the abandoned terraces here into vegetable gardens, Martin said.

Many Ifugaos farmers prefer to shape their own vegetable terraces by excavating mountainsides using motorized backhoes, residents said.

On the surface, the phenomenon of an ignored is the looking up the rice terraces and woodlands profitable again after years of neglect by the town's Ifugao people's forebears may seem to be a generous development, said Hilarion Dumda, acting director of the Department of Agriculture in the Cordillera.

Alfredo Turpi, a government engineer from Lamut, Ifugao, said Tinoc's rice terraces are the fifth in dimension compared to the more popular pastoral terraces in Banaue and Kiangan municipalities.

But she said few realize its importance then vice-cab-out and restaurant.

Unlike the Ifugao culture's reliance on forest cover to protect their rice terraces, Ifugao farmers clear land, sometimes through kaingin (burn and clash), because transported farming requires vast tracts of open land, Wenceslao said.

Kaingin has cost into Tinoc's virgin mossy forests, according to Manuel Salait, a councilman of Barangay Poblacion here.

Turpi, who builds Tinoc roads for the Department of Social Work and Development's Kapitbisig Lahas ni Kalinga-Apayao (Kalahi) program, said the erosion of Barangay Tukucan and Sitio Mamangaway, which straddle Tinoc and Ifugao, should have been shielded by the Mt. Polog national park reservation.

"Our gardens continue to intrude and no government protection has discouraged the farmers," he said.

There are suggestions that Tinoc, one of the country's poorest towns, welcome the investments that are pouring in from the Ifugao community of Ifugaos town.

Both towns lie on the contested borders of Benguet and Ifugao.

Tinoc's Kalinga-ym residents recalled that they virtually held picnics to watch Benguet farmers' movers dig out a whole mountainside for a future terraced garden.

"We have given up on gardening. We want to settle for something better," said a Barangay Sun.

Some people admitted they leased out their lands to Ifugao farmers in exchange for four-wheeled vehicles that could be used for other livelihood projects.

The first signs disaster were seen in 1997 when Ifugao farmers began settling along the boundary lands encompassed only by a lake, Turpi said.

He recalled that Ifugao settlers began digging into portions of old Ifugao homes and riverbeds, disrupting Ifugao's system of ecological protection.

"But when I returned to assess Tinoc's infrastructure program, I was shocked to find a multitude of vegetable gardens had already invaded its town," Turpi said.

Vevida said vegetable farms started sprouting in Tinoc when the government opened a major road from Ifugao to the town.

"The phenomenon in Tinoc is similar to the phenomenon of Ifugao. That town used to be an isolated community which government selected as the region's potato seed producer," she said.

"When government built the road, we lost control. Suddenly everybody was producing vegetable farms and it became a more commercial town. That's what is happening in Tinoc." With a report from Manuel Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Board places Cagayan under calamity state

TUGUEGARAO CITY—The provincial board of Cagayan has declared the province under a state of calamity on Monday, almost a week after floods brought about by typhoon "Igme" (international name: Aere) affected 27 of the province's 29 towns and city.

The province lost P205 million in crops and infrastructure in the typhoon, its worst 143,000 homes in the province were damaged.

Reports said only the towns of Santa Ana and Santa Praxedes were spared from floods.

The state of calamity declaration was recommended by the provincial disaster coordinating council headed by Gov. Edgar Lara and the provincial social welfare office.

Officials said the provincial government could now use its 5 percent calamity fund for relief and rescue operation activities.

They said the Cagayan PDCC launched the post-disaster assistance program to help residents whose houses were destroyed or damaged by the typhoon.

In Isabela, agriculture officials said the province lost P2.3 million in rice and corn crops.

Danilo Ramirez, provincial agriculturist, said damages in the typhoon were rice and corn farms in San Mariano, Sta. Maria, Jones, Tumauini, Gamu, Santo Tomas and Quezon towns.

But Tumauini mayor Joel Jamero reiterated the Ifugao's promise it helped them during the typhoon.

"The typhoon was also proved even beneficial to our farmers. If the rain doesn't fall not come, our farms will suffer drought and will affect our production target. Fortunately, the storm of the typhoon did not last and it is a blessing for farmers," he said. Reinaldus Gilder and Mildred Viloria Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Mine firms set sights on Diwalwal

MATI, Davao Oriental—Multinational mining companies want to operate in the gold-rich Mt. Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, according to a mining official.

But Leandro Ibarles, representative of the Australian firm Rio Ridge Mining Corp., said it appears that the government only favors small miners to exploit the riches of Diwata, also known as Diwalwal.

He said allowing only small miners in the gold-rich area, known for its high-grade ore, could be a serious problem in the long run.

"Their mining method is quite destructive to the environment as they are still using the antiquated method of extracting minerals," he said.

Ibarles said that in contrast, big mining companies use a "sandwich [plan] is totally environment-friendly."

"We use modern and highly sophisticated instruments in extracting minerals," he said.

Ibarles said big companies also employ pay their dues as government security units from their operations. Pevalonted Zamora, PDI Mindanao Bureau

1 killed, 31 hurt as crane crashes in Cebu shipyard

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—One person was killed while 31 others were injured, six of whom involved seriously, after a crane at the Lapulapu Cebu Shipyard crashed on the ground on Monday while transporting cars and workers of a ship undergoing repair at the shipyard.

The crane was holding aloft a passenger bus that was boarded by at least 50 crew and workers of the shipyard by 12 when it crashed from an undetermined height. The Maritime Industry Authority in Central Visayas Marina 7) and the Lapulapu City Police were now investigating the accident at the shipyard's compound in Barangay Looc, Lapulapu City.

Supt. Leon Oppus, chief of the Lapulapu police, said the six persons who were in serious condition were confined at the Chong Hua Hospital in Cebu City while the rest of the injured were treated at the Mactan Community Hospital in Lapulapu City.

The Marina Security was identified as Pedrito Roque, boards regional of the Superferry 12, owned by WG&A Shipping Company.

Oppus said the injured victims belonged to the different subcontractor companies that undertook the repair of the vessel.

Marina 7 regional director Elmer Cabahug said his men began investigating the shipyard as soon as they received the report of the accident.

Marina 7 regional director Elmer Cabahug said his men began investigating the shipyard as soon as they received the report of the accident.

Cabahug said they would be finished if the investigators would find lapses in Roque's operation.

Marina issued licenses for shipyards and has the authority to inspect and impose penalties for lapses, Cabahug said yesterday.

The accident happened shortly at around 11:30 a.m. on Monday but it was not reported to the police until about 2:45 p.m. The police were not also allowed to investigate the accident until way past 5 p.m. Monday night.

In a press conference issued last Tuesday night, Seagull Cebu management explained that crane number 13 was serving the demolishing personnel of the vessel composed of approximately 40 crew and maintenance when it toppled during the process of swinging toward the wharf.

Oppus said his investigators went back to the shipyard yesterday to continue the investigation but the shipyard's management asked the police to let them conduct an internal investigation and would just furnish police with results.

Oppus said police would give the management the benefit of the doubt and would wait for the results of their internal investigation as there were no complainants yet.

However, Oppus said initial investigation showed there was a safety lapse on the part of the crew of the crane allowed the passenger that the crane was lifting on to overloaded with people.

Leaders split . . .

Front page A1

ple on the road to peace and prosperity permanently," she said.

"We have to take the opportunity within a reasonable time frame because this is a long, deliberate process that involves our future."

Mr. Arroyo campaigned on a platform that included changing the presidential form of government, which is a parliamentary federal system, saying this would usher in economic progress and bring government closer to the people.

During the campaign, she even expressed readiness to give up the two years of her six-year term in order to pave the way for a parliamentary shift in 2007.

Later, she appeared to change her mind on the timing of such a shift, saying after her inaugural that she wanted to see the new form of government in place at the end of her term in 2010.

Yesterday she made clear she would set her hand to the issue of Charter change.

Lodge meeting

"I intend to call the Lodge as the earliest opportunity to discuss this matter of national importance," she said, referring to the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council composed of officials of the Cabinet, the Senate and the House.

"I will consult key stakeholders representing the people in all regions and sectors. I have completed the list, so the first meeting, we would want a consensus on not the time and manner of effecting change," she said.

She did not say when the meeting would take place.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Mr. Arroyo wanted to convene the Lodge soon, possibly before she delivers her State of the Nation Address in September or July 26.

Senate President Franklin Drilon has warned that pursuing Charter change now while the country was facing huge problems like a yawning budget deficit, could affect her economic programs and plunge the country into an Argentine-like financial crisis.

But Ms. Arroyo said Charter change would complement her 10-point agenda. The 10 unity programs she said she would implement during her term were to:

"1) will restore the most effective and durable implementation of our anti-poverty programs," she said.

Ms. Arroyo has espoused parliamentary for a constitutional convention (Concon), composed of delegates elected from all 212 congressional districts, instead of a constituent assembly comprising incumbent senators and congressmen.

Cayetano, a presidential adviser on constitutional reforms, said Ms. Arroyo was amenable to holding a Concon election simultaneously with the barangay elections in May next year to minimize expenses.

Pleiadorum: Tough choices

Noting the United States was "watching anxiously" the political developments in the Philippines, Pleiadorum warned he cautioned the nation not to be distracted from the "hard things" that need to be done.

One such distraction, he indicated, was shifting into Charter change.

Pleiadorum met with Drilon at the Senate after returning from Iraq, telling reporters that they discussed Drilon's priorities and that he learned that one of these was the "fiscal crisis that we hope the economy will save."

He said the United States would only offer its experience and advice on these things.

"We will have to choose what is best for you, but it's important to choose, you can't put off these tough choices," he added.

He on ally of the Philippines, Washington was only encouraging Manila, he said, noting there was only "human nature" sometimes to "put off difficult choices and find short-cuts."

The US ambassador said: "If you do the right things, the hard things, you can count on us to stand with you and see you through the short-term pain for the long-term gain."

Asked if ongoing debates on whether Congress should take on the Constitution were a distraction, Pleiadorum said discussions on changing the 1987 Constitution were important in a democracy like the Philippines.

"But at the end of the day, at some point, the discussions have to subside and actions have to happen on the things that really matter," he told reporters.

"We want the Philippines to get it right and you will decide how to get it right," Pleiadorum said.

He said that the United States recognized the priorities of Manila, and "those moments of opportunity and moments of challenge.

"It is really a moment of opportunity but it's a 'flowing one'," he said. "And our concern as friends of the Philippines is that you are this moment for our prioritize."

Sulow's offer

A congressman yesterday made an offer that legislators opposed to Charter change may find hard to resist, if only to make them dance the Cha-Cha.

If they agree to amend the Charter through a constituent assembly, they will "automatically become members of the National Assembly" of the new parliament until 2010, according to Rep. Constantino Jaworski Jr. (Lakas-Cagayan de Oro City).

The offer was reminiscent of a similar ploy used by the late President Ferdinand Marcos shortly after he declared martial law in 1972, to name weaknesses to support a new Constitution that would allow him to prolong his rule by decree.

In essence the pact, "or least one-third of them shall be appointed to the Cabinet," said Jaworski, one of the constitutional experts in the House.

In his proposed resolution, the Senate and the House will convene as a Constituent Assembly to override the 1987 Constitution and specified by-words, among other things, for a parliamentary federal shift in 2007.

GMA president/PM

Jaworski didn't leave out Ms Arroyo in the deal.

"The incumbent President shall serve as prime minister and concurrently as president under the new Constitution until his term expires on June 30, 2010," he said.

De Venecia had also tried to entice Ms Arroyo with such an offer to make her stick to her campaign promise of serving as a transition president until 2007.

"The parliamentary system provided in the Constitution shall begin with the elections of 2007 and the assumption to office of those elected thereto," Jaworski said.

Role for VP

Even Vice President Noli de Castro would play a role where the new parliament convenes.

"The incumbent Vice President shall preside in the convening of the National Assembly on June 30, 2007 for the election of the Speaker who shall immediately thereafter assume his office," Jaworski said.

He also proposed: "The senators elected in 2004 shall serve as such until approval of these amendments and implementation thereof, and shall automatically become members of the National Assembly from such date until June 30, 2010, without regard to any dissolution of the National Assembly in between."

Under Jaworski's proposed resolution, amendments to the President of the Republic, starting in 2010, will serve as the "symbolic head of state."

He or she shall have a term of four years, the same term of office for members of parliament.

"The executive power shall be exercised by the Prime Minister with the assistance of the Cabinet," Jaworski said.

Jaworski said that the unicameral parliament with a bicameral basis of representation (party distribution) in the passage of urgent legislative initiatives because of deadlocks between the two chambers of Congress.

"The presidential system has spawned a culture of corruption and corruption directly due to the enormous expenses it entails for a national campaign for the presidency," Jaworski said.

New kids on block

But the new kids on the block seemed to take that they would not be participants in the House.

The bloc of bicyclists Rep. Benaldo Punzo (Bataan), Antipolo's ex-barrage declared that the group would support this bid of De Venecia for a fourth term as Speaker.

But as Punzo himself indicated, their group would give De Venecia a hard time on such issues as Charter change and the designation of Cabinet ministers to the 13th Congress.

Punzo is now the head of the reconstituted Ambalikat ng Mamayang Pilipino, the personal political party of Ms Arroyo.

Asked if Estrada would field a challenger against De Venecia, Punzo said: "I do not see that coming."

But the Pimentel and De Venecia blocs are opposed to clash over Charter change, specifically over whether a should be done through a constitutional convention or a constituent assembly. With a report from Edith T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

More Filipinos to die of heart ailments, stroke

From page A1

Unhealthy eating habits are high up on the list of "culprits."

Unhealthy eating habits

In a presentation before media yesterday, former PGH president Rudy Jr. revealed that almost half of Filipino adults were unhealthy, with 22 percent overweight and 20.1 percent obese.

He said the group was the most prone to developing metabolic syndrome (MS), or a "clustering" of risk factors that trigger strokes and heart attacks. A person's waist circumference, cholesterol level, blood pressure, and the triglycerides and glucose content in his blood are indicative of his or at risk.

Asian marks

In Asia, a person with MS would have at least three of these conditions: 1) a waist measurement of 90 cm for men and 80 cm for women; 2) blood pressure of 130/85 mmHg or higher; 3) fasting glucose of 110 mg/dl; 4) elevated triglycerides of 150 mg/dl; and 5) reduced HDL cholesterol of 40 mg/dl for men and 50 mg/dl for women.

The last three conditions are determined by specific blood tests.

"It's alarming that 40 percent of the population is either overweight or obese," he said during the press conference in Discovery Center.

Studies in other countries have shown that people with MS are three times more likely to develop coronary heart disease. The Philippine figures are among the lowest in Southeast Asia, but are fast catching up with those of its neighbors.

In the United States, 23.7 percent of the population in their 30s, and at least 40 per cent of those in their 40s and older, have MS.

Starting point

Ay and two colleagues are set to start next week a research that will determine the prevalence of MS among college students aged 18 to 21. A foreign drug company, Boehringer Pharma, is funding the study.

Lifestyle disorder

Most Filipinos' penchants for fast food and other poor eating habits are cultivated in their college days and are formed by the time they start working, according to Ay.

"If this is a lifestyle disorder, then late intervention would also be helpful, as we want to concentrate on the young population," he explained.

The PGH will survey 500 students in five universities, three of them in Metro Manila.

I felt betrayed, she tells GMA

Front page B1

to them, but right now we are on a ban for travels. We acknowledge that Secretary Dinky has been in meet- and the members of the Cabinet feel sad.

"Yes, there are some other higher considerations, and of course all of those are within the prerogative of the President. We are all professionals, we accept the decision of the President in this particular regard."

Butch also said Mr Arroyo had met with Soliman and accepted her resignation "with utmost regard."

Transition period

Soliman said she would head the DSWD until Oct. 31 to ensure a "transition period" that she said Dr Cantos had agreed on on Monday.

Missing the first to be named to the Cabinet after Estes President Joseph Estrada's ouster in January 2001, Soliman has served the longest administration for the last three and a half years, the last for months of which she spent on the campaign trail, arranging Mr Arroyo's dialogue with the poor.

Soliman was initially reluctant to discuss her feelings on the matter. But she eventually disclosed that she considered resigning the "best and most principled thing to do" after learning about Dr Cantos's "strong preference" for the DSWD post as early as June 29, the eve of Ms Arroyo's inauguration.

She said she was "surprised" and "did not expect" to lose the Cabinet at this point.

"I would like to inform the public that I have given my resignation, effective Oct. 31, 2004, to support the political commitments to appoint the Vice President as secretary of the DSWD," Soliman said at the press conference, reading from a prepared statement.

"The President has recognized the strong mandate of the Vice President from the people, and believes that he could serve the department well," she said.

Competence, commitment

Dr Cantos himself said he would accept any government post that Ms Arroyo might offer.

In a statement, he expressed thanks to Soliman "for her kind words."

Dr Cantos said he shared "the common observation" that Soliman served the DSWD "with the highest level of competence and commitment."

"However," he added, "Kabayan believes that the President should be given a free hand in deciding who will be best for any Cabinet position."

But in a phone interview yesterday with the ABS-CBN News Channel, Dr Cantos said that the matter was a common subject of discussion during the election campaign, and that certain questions just worried him and Soliman to commit in order to guarantee a controversy.

"Noong kampanye, ilan naming pinagusapan yan. Ayaw nala kaming dapat pag-usapan. May mga ilan during panic tuning pag-aaway si Dinky, pareng magpa-interview pa rin ng wrong sa. Hirap naman," he said.

Signal

In an interview with the Inquirer, Soliman screamed the clues of events leading to yesterday's emotional farewell.

On June 25, she was told by someone, whom she did not name, "that maybe I should think about going to the NHFC. That was the signal."

"I was told that the preference of the Vice President was to be with the DSWD," she said.

The exchange ended with her not suggesting that she and the unnamed party somehow there talk later because she was then busy with preparations for the June 30 inaugural. They also agreed that she should discuss the matter with the President.

At a meeting on July 2 with Ms Arroyo, "we looked at options," Soliman said.

"The President recognized that the political dynamics of the situation was that we have to do what we have to do," she said.

It was at a second "very candid" meeting with the President on Monday that Soliman submitted her resignation.

Soliman said she was offered the chairmanships of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Social Security System, as well as another Cabinet post, as head of the Presidential Management Staff.

But she said she begged off because "they are not my expertise."

"It will not be fair to the public because we've been saying that this government is for reform and for qualified people," she said.

She also denied having been considered for the agencies to form portfolio. While she had worked for pro-farmer groups, she said, "administering land reform is different from advocating it."

Her open monitoring as the largest enabling law statement, Soliman let the years fell when asked for her advice to her successor.

She said she was turning over to the Cardin a "very professional" organization that was "free of politics."

She expressed the hope that it would stay that way. "That's my only appeal."

"We deal with the poor every day and we know they are losing," she said. "We can go out and say that some are allowed (into the world) to be politicized. The poor have no political color, no party, no ideology. They just want to be helped whatever their beliefs are."

Back to the NGOs

Soliman said she intended to rejoin the ranks of nongovernmental organizations that would support the Arroyo administration's poverty alleviation programs, including peace initiatives with the rebels.

She said that before joining the government, she had devoted 33 years of her life to NGO work.

But after saying that "many were surprised and could not understand" why she had to go, Soliman described Dr Cantos as "very well equipped" for the DSWD's post.

She said the programs and reforms she was leaving behind could be the "hornegain (stepping stone)" that would allow him to continue the public service that he had been performing since his days as a populist broadcaster.

No turf war

She denied suggestions that a "turf war" had erupted between her and Dr Cantos.

"The interest of the country is higher than my ego," she told reporters early on in the break.

In his own statement, issued after Soliman's press conference, Barry described the outgoing secretary as "a gracious and selfless professional who stepped down to merely facilitate to serve a higher objective."

Impeccable record

"The President and the people are grateful for her service. She served the poor and fought for the poor," Barry said, adding:

"She leaves behind an impeccable record of service and a dispassionate to a better position to fulfill his mandate."

Barry declined to comment on observations that the position was a political accommodation to Dr Cantos, who had earned down his supporters' call for him to run for president and instead agreed to be Ms Arroyo's running mate.

"If you don't mind, we would rule out to dwell on the issue," Barry said.

"For is something that's been already decided. We just would like to welcome the Vice President, let's also very capable, he has been engaged in public service ... Sir, do not wish to make any comparisons, but we believe that (he) would also be able to do a good job at the department." *With a report from Julie Lucas Arellano*

"THE BEST and I go laughed thing to do," Soliman says of her resignation after learning of Dr Cantos's "strong preference" for her position. "The country's interest is higher than my ego."

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METRO

Motorists fume over new toll increase

TRAFFIC slowed down on South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) as motorists caught up at the toll gates complaining about the new rates the same around Philippine National Construction Corp. imposed starting Monday.

Motorists using the South Luzon Expressway, on the other hand, griped over the fact that there was no reason to raise the toll rates as road improvements have been introduced, unlike the case of the NLEX.

Additional charge

Based on the PNCC's current per kilometer toll matrix, the agency charged an additional 10 centavos for cars, pickups, jeepneys and vans (Class 1); 30 centavos for light trucks and buses (Class 2); and 50 centavos for heavy trucks and trailers (Class 3) using the 87 km expressway.

The SLEX is the main link of 22 Northern and Central Luzon provinces to Metro Manila. The new toll rates from Balintawak, Quezon City, to the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay, Batangas, and vice versa are P41 for Class 1 vehicles, P82 for Class 2, and P123 for Class 3.

Nasty remarks

Collectors endured many complaints from motorists.

"If we quarrel with them, the lines would be much longer," said a PNCC female employee assigned in the fare gate.

Manuel Serrano, PNCC toll-way division chief, said the agency was forced to collect new rates, saying the last raise in 1998 and were deferred twice on May 15 and 24.

"We have to raise funds for maintenance and operations or we neglect the road," Antonio said.

The PNCC raised the rates in the Lopez family-owned Manila North Tollways Corp. was about to finish the rehabilitation of the SLEX before it assumes management of the expressway by September.

The MTPC also increased its rate increasing fees at P2.44 for every kilometer starting on September.

Spiral effect

Quezon province legislator Lourdes Bondad assemblyman Mamerto Mallie said the new rates could trigger a new increase of fliting.

"The transportation costs for hauling fuel, marine and other products will also increase. This is going to be an added burden for all of us, especially those who are just barely making both ends meet," he said.

Mallie also lamented the fact that there was no public hearing on the matter.

Motorists using the South Expressway from Alabang to Muntinlupa City to Calamba in Laguna are to have now paid a total P21 for the journey as of 7 PM.

Tonyllo Obejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Belfin T. Mallari Jr., PNI Southern Luzon Bureau

SC affirms death for 4 kidnappers

By Philip C. Tubeza and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT WAS a bad day for the bad guys.

The Supreme Court yesterday affirmed the death sentences meted out three years and a woman who kidnapped a 9-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy in Quezon City seven years ago.

Yesterday, too, a Makati regional trial court judge handed down the death penalty to a former Navotas policeman and two of his companions for abducting a college student in 2001, and keeping him in a septic tank for eight days before he escaped from his captors.

In a 25-page decision, the Supreme Court affirmed the sentence given to Elvie Tandoc, his cousin Magdalena Galanzal, Reef Cyrus Bonilla and Edwin Tampos for abducting the third grade student as he was waiting for his father to pick him up from school on July 2, 1997.

The high court said the appellants' denials and alibi were self-serving and could not prevail over the victim's "truthful, positive and straightforward testimony."

"Children of tender years are likely to be more observant of incidents which take place within their view than older persons, and their testimonies are likely more correct vis-a-vis those that of older persons," the court said, citing its ruling in People v. Alba.

The high court added that after his release, the boy had told the police of his abductors. Ejaculation and a culprit, while another (Bonilla) had really beat.

The suspects were told to pay the victim and his parents P150,000 in moral damages and P400,000 in actual damages.

Court records showed that the boy was brought to a house where they called up the boy's father and told him to come up with P10 million for his safe release.

The kidnappers agreed to lower their ransom after they were told that the family could only raise P500,000.

The boy was freed two days after he was abducted.

Presidential Anti-Crime Commission agents arrested Bonilla and Tampos on August 13, 1997, while police arrested Galanzal and Tandoc the following year.

On June 4, 1998, the Quezon City Regional Trial Court found the four guilty of kidnapping with ransom and sentenced them to death. A co-accused, Antonio Ponce, was acquitted for insufficient evidence.

Malabon City Regional Trial Court Judge Emmanuel Lantin, on the other hand, sentenced to death Rodolfo Ringlos, a former Navotas policeman, Antonio Ayo Jr. and Reyto Ayo for the kidnapping of Rose Lorenzo Tellosa.

The three were also ordered to pay Tellosa P50,000 in moral damages.

The other suspects, Roger Delgado, Abe Makin, Alex Lo and Willy Lopez remain at large.

Tellosa managed to escape by removing the tank cover that his abductors used to seal with in-sense

LOST ART
Bystanders sort of long gone days when boys spent afternoons reading in rivers and creeks catching fish, a child tries to wrap up tadpoles in a flooded section of Wire Dike near Taft Avenue in Manila.

Robbers take rough ride in Mandaluyong

By Luige del Puerto

TWO ROBBERS who grabbed P130,000 from a bank client left a trail of blood and confusion yesterday morning as they went on crude ascent in Mandaluyong City.

After a brief gun duel with a police officer, one of the suspects, Edgar Silverio, 35, of Barangay San Jose, Pandacan, Quezon City, was forced to give up after his knife counterattack in a hotel compound.

His accomplice, identified only as J.R., managed to escape amid the confusion that followed.

According to the police, the duo robbed grocery store owner Ana Ing Ai Bonifacio Ortiz, Mandaluyong City sales lad Jan Wilson P1,200,000 from the Bank of Philippine Islands branch at the corner Real Street and Buendia Drive.

She was also reportedly carrying P30,000 more in cash and other bills.

Ing was reportedly walking toward a tricycle terminal at the corner of Real Avenue and Hidoro Street, which was about 50 meters from the bank, when the suspects struck at about 10:30 a.m.

The duo grabbed the bag of Ing as it jumped and in full view of bystanders, who began shouting "Hold-up!"

Apparently startled, one of the suspects shot bystander Antonio Maldonado, 50, whom they reportedly thought was a police officer. Maldonado was hit in the left arm.

Silverio and J.R. jumped on to a motorcycle and began to drive away.

However, one of the bystanders, Leonardo Muñoz, 24, who lived nearby on Buendia Drive, saw the incident, boarded his motorcycle and drove after the suspects.

Muñoz said all he could think of at that time was to get the suspects. He added that he felt for his co-victim for his safety.

That hope, a chase that took them through at least five barangays in Mandaluyong, Barangka Drive, Pasay Road, Old Wack, Barangka Ilaya and Boni Ong Jolo.

Along Kayamanggi Street, Muñoz near Dampet Mabitay, 47, a uniformed member of the Mayor's Action Command, and elected four of the robbers.

Mabitay jumped on his own motorcycle and joined Muñoz in the chase, occasionally dodging bullets fired by Silverio.

Also on Kayamanggi Street, the suspects' motorcycle rammed a tricycle and they were thrown onto the pavement.

The suspects were about to flee when the passengers of the tricycle, Andres Briones, 45, tried to stop them, and incurring they were arrested robbers.

Muñoz and Silverio, as if on cue, stood at Briones, and fired, hitting the victim in the back.

Silverio then commandeered the tricycle of J.R. Ilic, 19, taking the young man along as hostage.

On Barangka Drive, Muñoz found some close to getting wounded—or worse, getting killed.

Mabitay managed to outrun the gap between him and Silverio as traffic forced them to slow down.

As Muñoz was about 5 meters away, riffed to stand in line, and fired twice.

He missed, thanks to Silverio, who made his tricycle move forward in a jerking fashion to keep the suspect off balance.

At the Boni Avenue tunnel, Silverio lost out wounded traffic enforcer Joseph Mejia, who maneuvers said tried to stop the tricycle he was in.

"He shot him at close range," said Muñoz.

The suspect then ordered Mitio to make the turnaround at Legaspi Road at the corner of Pioneer and Madison Streets, where Silverio was surrounded by responding policemen.

He gave up after a few minutes and surrendered his 9-mm pistol and the P130,000 loot.

Meanwhile, the three wounded victims were treated at the Mandaluyong City Medical Center.

Filmmaker defends showing of 'Imelda'

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FILMMAKER Ramona Diaz yesterday denied having misled her ones first lady Imelda Marcos into thinking that the documentary film "Imelda" was for a teacher's thesis.

Diaz told the Makati Regional Trial Court that she interviewed Marcos on camera in 1995 for her thesis "Ipo-ipo Beijing," which was about the role of women in Philippine history.

She said her thesis "was totally different from this documentary on her life," titled "Imelda."

According to Diaz, Marcos was totally aware that "Imelda" was about her life as influenced in pre-production documentaries in 2003.

She added that filming for "Imelda" only began in 2003.

Diaz stressed the former first lady even gave inputs on its content and treatment.

At times, during the filming, Marcos "would excitedly intervene in the gathering crowd that we were doing a documentary on her life," Diaz said.

She disclosed that Marcos had called her and her crew such pests and expressions endearing.

Also, the 41-year-old filmmaker said that Marcos had signed a document to allow her to exhibit footage for the documentary.

But Marcos, who had asked for time to stop the public exhibition of the film in the country, branded the document as a forgery.

"The signature is not good and not perfect," Marcos said, saying that the signature was absent of her signature on the cover of "Circles of Life."

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Benitez

Pia 'one and only choice' to replace Janice on 'S-Files'

By Malou R. Cruz

ITA Cuenco will take over the hosting chores of Janice de Belen on GMA 7's Sunday show his talk show "S-Files" starting this weekend.

The people behind "S-Files" never thought of asking controversial actress and host Rosanna Roces to be Janice's replacement because Deang still has an existing contract with "Startalk," the Sunday afternoon talk show also on GMA 7, according to "S-Files" program manager Sedfrey Magno.

"We were not sure and only three to replace Janice," Magno told Inquirer Entertainment in a telephone interview last Monday. "GMA has been receiving positive responses from viewers about Pia as show biz host on '24 Oras'."

Magno denied talk that "S-Files" initially entered to get Rosanna to fill the position that would be vacated by Janice. The program manager said people might linked Rosanna to "S-Files" because the actress-TV host has not been appearing for work on "Startalk" since her highly publicized quarrel with her former talent manager Lolit Solis and her former friend and business partner Dr. Vicky Belo began.

"There's no truth to it," Magno stressed about the rumor that Rosanna would take the place of Janice. "We just need a hosting to justify production. We didn't even think of talking to her (Rosanna). We chose no one but Pia."

He said that, in fact, Pia is set to sign a contract with "S-Files" today, Wednesday like, however, refused to say until when Pia's contract would be until.

"Everything is confidential," Magno added.

Last Sunday, Janice formally bade goodbye to the viewers of "S-Files," as well as to her cohosts Richard Gomez, Jory Marquez and Pauleen Bellosta.

The actress said she no longer wish to re-new her contract with the show and would simply use her free time to be with her children.

More than three years ago, Janice ended her 10-year marriage with actor John Estrella. They have four kids— Ian, Kiana, Ilyka and Yuan.

Janice's eldest child is Ija Biay, her love child with actor Aga Muhlach.

Magno said Janice had long-expressed her intention to leave the show. "Kay she still needed money to raise her five children so she hung on."

She pointed out that Janice would sometimes refuse to cackle "scandal" issues, especially when these concerned her friends in show business. As a compromise, Magno said, she simply suggest Janice to do another segment.

"It was Janice's decision to leave," she said. "She didn't want to destroy her relationship with her show biz friends but she didn't want to be spiteful to her ex-boss either."

Magno said GMA 7 still has other plans for Janice, who also hosts the daily morning talk show "Eat" with her sister Gelli de Belen, on the same channel.

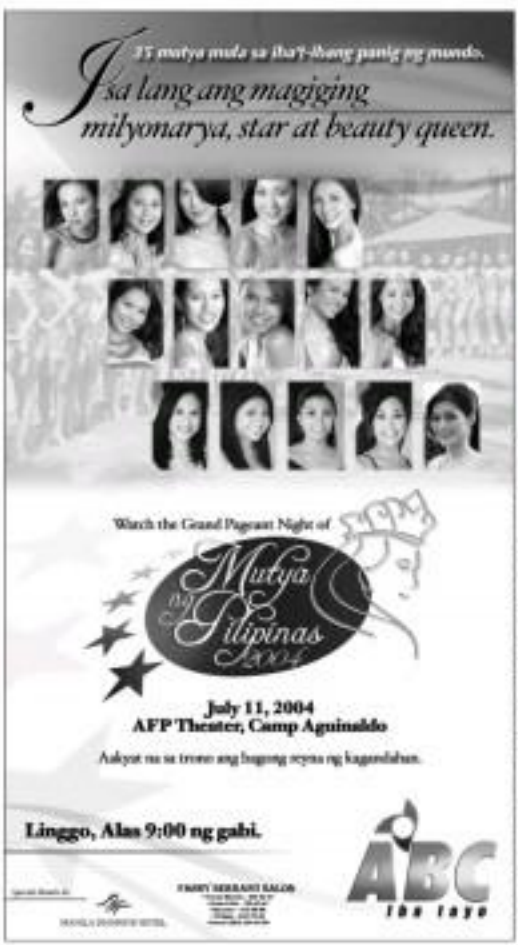
"Until those plans materialize, Janice said she wanted to rest," said Magno.

She said Pia is different from Janice in that the latter is a talk show host and not an actress. Unlike Janice, Pia has no personal relationship with the stars to consider," said Magno. Nestor struggled for a time on "S-Files". She confessed that she had a tendency to take sides."

TIME OUT. Da Beker says she wants to spend more time with her kids, including youngest Yuan.

FREE SPIRIT. Beauty is expected not to take sides when tackling issues on the show.

'We didn't even think of talking to Rosanna Roces,' says program manager



MAYOR BINAY dragged into mess.

SUPERSTAR PROTESTS. Aunor's complaint is "ridiculous," says Agudao.

Binay to Aunor: A simple check would have made you properly informed

By Marinel R. Cruz

MMFA Aunor's accusation of politicking in the ongoing 2004 Makati Cinemanila International Film Festival is plain "absurd, ridiculous," according to Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay whom only government is sponsoring the film fest.

The actress was known as the Superstar had said in an interview on the evening news program "24 Oras" on GMA 7 that Cinemanila organizers deliberately excluded her movie "Magdusa Ka," directed by Marilou J. de los Reyes, from the festival because she is a known supporter of newly proclaimed President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Binay had endorsed presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. and other members of Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) in the May 10 national election.

Binay said the Arroyo administration "has been consistently achieving its offer of reconciliation and for everyone to set aside political partisanship.

"But it certainly does not help when you so readily and conveniently accuse me of acts I did not commit," he said in his letter, a copy of which was sent to Inquirer Entertainment. "A simple and cursory check would have made you properly and accurately informed."

"The City of Makati supports the Metropolitan Film Festival through financial and other types of assistance," Binay said. "The manner of completing the final list of entries is left, as it has been for six years, to the technical organizers . . . I had no hand at all in choosing or deciding which (movie titles would be included in the film festival."

In an earlier interview, filmmaker and Makati Cinemanila director Tikoy Aguilar had said "Magdusa Ka" failed to be included in the festival because it did not have subtitles and did not make it in the preselection of films on view.

Aguilar added that the festival screening committee was also looking for a local film that had participated in at least two other international festivals abroad.

"That issue is on ridiculous and absurd," Aguilar told Inquirer Entertainment, referring to Aunor's protest. "I am a supporter of GMA, Binay is a supporter of FPJ, but we didn't even talk about that."

Aguilar said the festival has the right to choose to show movies just like other local film festivals choose theirs.

"We are questioned the Manila Film Festival committee when it chose the six films that they featured (last June)," Aguilar pointed out.

Binay said Aunor "dragged" him into the controversy when she "laid the blame on politics" the "disqualification" of "Magdusa Ka" as an official film fest entry.

"I will have you know that Makati's participation in the international festival is anchored on its aspirations and objective of promoting understanding among nations through culture and the arts, and is strictly devoid of any political considerations," said Binay.

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SPORTS

Ginebra guns for clincher tonight

Torion back in action as vengeful Barakos try to force sudden death

DAVAO: Hayo has warned those who plan to tie Ginebra's celebratory balloons onto the rafters of the Araneta Coliseum: They won't be falling today.

MVP: Red Bull's Ilo

The hatchet-faced Red Bull Barako bravado took his cues at making guarantees, seeing the best of five series for the PBA Governors' Cup Semifinal Series championship still tied, 2-2.

But he took his prediction a step further that Bull will win the championship.

"We will crush Game 5 and we will crush the series after we win Game 4 [today], we already have the momentum," said Hayo, setting the tone for tonight's encounter, where the Gin Kings have to finish off the Beermen of 7-Up.

Eric Black, who produced Ginebra's semifinal victory and is wise to the finals, shied away from crediting any team's momentum.

"Not this time," said the sentimental-favorite import. "Everybody's starting from zero. We all don't want this series to take longer than it has to. But there's a lot of hard work to be done. Red Bull has shown it can come back from [deficits], so we have to be prepared."

The Kings lead the series in many ways than one. They hold a 2-1 edge in the race-to-three affair and, as coach Bing Pinneda claims, Ginebra import Terrence Boggs is getting a lot of calls and non-calls his way.

"We should not get our game going because we felt there were calls that should have gone for us but didn't," said Orino.

"We have a feeling that Boggs is being permitted the referees for certain eight to nine fouls, every game but they call only three or four."

Actually, Boggs, who was ordered by an all-frustrated foul eight in the very first play of Game Three, which Ginebra won, 96-86, had been saddled with five fouls in each of the last two matches. And this is what Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen has to adjust to.

"We're starting to get used to it. The players know what to do every time our import has to sit [because of foul trouble]. We just have to minimize our errors, make some stops and get the rebounds," said Tanquingcen.

Assured Torion, back in business after a one-game suspension for elbowing Boggs in the nape in Game 2, will be a big plus for the Barakos.

"He's a guy who can put numbers on the scoreboard and he'll be a big problem for us. We're not going to shut him up. He's a big guy. We may not be able to stop him, but we can stay with him," said Tanquingcen.

Francis Odiaw

Cojuangco decision stuns Dayrit

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HOT 1 issue?

Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Cirilo Dayrit may have created his own civil war, he inferred former congressman Jose "Peping" Cojuangco the top POC post last year.

COJUANGCO

And now that Cojuangco, who revealed Dayrit's offer to assume Dayrit Post Olympic at the Manila Pavilion, has taken the helm, the "very green" POC chief will now try to talk the former lawmaker out of his decision.

"I talked to him early last week," said Dayrit. "Now I'm surprised now his decision is to run. ... In the meeting, he told them that he was expecting to get appointed to a Cabinet position."

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SBC, Letran try to bounce back

DEFENDING champions Letran Knights and the San Beda Red Lions try to recover their lost ground as they clash today in the 80th NCAA basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Knights and the Lions, tested in the tournament's opening encounters, lost key double-digit margins in their recent outings. Letran bowed to surprise host Perpetual Help, 69-64, while San Beda succumbed to the JRU Heliodoro Jane pose's roller dweller, 75-63.

"It is a wake up call for us," said Lions coach Boots Rosales, whose team shot miserably from the field in Monday's game after posting back-to-back victories.

In the other senior match-up, the St. Benilde Blazers hope to end their heartbreak losses as they meet the University of Perpetual Help Altas at 4pm.

The Blazers lost their first game by the slim of three points against the Cardinals, and drew to the Dolphins by two points. The Altas, meanwhile, nurse their second straight victory after stunning the San Sebastian Stags, last year's runners-up.

In junior play the powerhouse San Beda RedCubs tackle the Letran Squires at 12:00 n.m. while the Jose Rizal University Heralds clash with the Malcolm Jacinto IS Jaya at 2 p.m.

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	1	0
San Beda	1	0
JRU	1	1
Perpetual	1	1
SBC	1	1
CSJL	0	1
EAC	0	1
St. Benilde	0	1

GAMES TODAY
(Rizal Memorial)
11:00 a.m. — Letran vs San Beda (jrs)
2 p.m. — St. Benilde vs Perpetual (jrs)
4 p.m. — St. Benilde vs Perpetual (srs)
Letran vs San Beda (srs)

MAPUAN'S Jose Mulgapaz (right) attempts to drive past JRU's Lester Mark Cordero. (EDWARD KIMS)

WBA champ wants Pacquiao

By Soliver L. Laguinday, Contributor

UNDEFEATED World Boxing Association featherweight champion Chris John of Indonesia says people's champion Manny Pacquiao is the best featherweight today and hopes to fight the Filipino ring hero soon.

PACQUIAO

John claimed the WBA belt at Jakarta on July 3, 2003, after he knocked out Mexican Jose Manuel Mesquiz — who drew with Pacquiao in a controversial title bout in Cebu City last year — to retain the super bantamweight crown, anchored bolstered to WBA champion holding another world crown.

Pacquiao had added the WBA crown to his International Boxing Federation belt after defeating Derrick Gainer.

John (INO, 35 KO) won over Columbian Oscar Leon via a split decision in September but was invited, Indonesian camp to the WBA champion title.

When asked by Figueroa who he thinks is the best featherweight in the planet today, John was unequivocal: "Pacquiao, of course. He's rated No. 1 in the world. I have seen his fights and he's really great. All fighters in the featherweight division are great. Bernie Atienza and Boonra is also still there. And recently, he TKO'd [Freddie] Apolo."

Says Pacquiao is currently negotiating for a unification rematch with Barrera, who who trashed the year

Starry cast in badminton tilt

TOP movie and television personalities led by Richard Gomez and Regine Velasquez have been invited to do the Sportsbreak Corporate and Celebrity Cup 2 badminton championships on July 12-16 at Club 565 Badminton Center in Cebu, Quezon City and at Old Airport Hall in Mandaluyong City.

Also on the roster are Randy Santiago, Jinky Perez, Jennifer Dawn, Karen de los Reyes, Brad Kevin, Shereen Jerosca, Mark Herras, Rainier Castillo, Frank Garcia, CJ Ramos, Arnett de la Paz, Jude Lopez and other members of the Child Actor Union.

Entered in the tournament proper are teams from the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Hi-Bic Consumer, Procter and Gamble, Pilars Styles, Bingo Brasserie, Fribid, BC Ch. Intermission Plus, PLTC Philippine National Bank, Team Canfield, La Mar Cafeto, BH Corp., Klimatics, Citibank and SM Supermalls.

Cojuangco decision . . .

[illegible]

Duprit admitted offering the presidency to Cojuangco in 2002, right after the Busan Asian Games, where Cojuangco's daughter Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, captained the equestrian gold-medal.

Duprit said he is still hoping that Cojuangco won't insist him head-on in the POC elections this year.

He added that with the Southeast Asian Games just around the corner, a change of leadership would be "unwise."

"I believe he can help Philippine sports in another capacity devoid of the intrigues and day-to-day responsibilities, while we do the work," said Duprit, chair of the Games' organizing committee.

But Cojuangco, who is anchoring his bid on unity is unfazed.

"If I can help unify sports, then I will do it. This is a very difficult job," said Cojuangco, who was accompanied to the Forum by daughter Mikee, athletes-friend Carlos Yulo, tennis-head Daddy Avelino, and ex-boxer-leader Boxer "Boy" Nazeron.

Cojuangco, younger brother of former president Cory Aquino, said he has been talking to the heads of different national sports associations about his plan to oust the POC czar.

He added that his priority is to "bridge the gap" between the POC and the Philippine Sports Commission, the government sports agency and issues pertain for the staging of the SEA Games which will be held here for only the third time.

Angels and demons at play

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU don't need to be as honest did as Maria Sharapova to shine out in the sports world.

You don't have to be as deep, ill-tempered as Jennifer Capriati to make a mark and decide a championship at times.

What's truly beautiful about tennis is that, unlike in contact sports like basketball, participants don't have to bare the dark side of their souls.

Look, it was not part of the original script, but the dirty tactics employed by Yano in Red Bull's game against Granito last week has suddenly become a key factor in the PBA Fiesta Conference title playoffs.

Of course, what lands Gin clutched deadly dirty was that Yano, a continental drug abuser, had previously been suspended for smashing the nose of Jimmy Alapag with his forearm.

Last week, he committed a more grievous offense. He mauled Beer Barrel and elbowed Granito import Tawaye Baggo on the nape.

***

Yano is scheduled to return to action today.

At its past appearances, the powerful drug abuser has reportedly been expected to show in the fans.

And he could only add to the suspicion that Yano, a swollen, has become a necessity within the pro league.

Oh, basketball is not really a harmless mistress.

What has become certain, though, is that these millionaires for place in the tennis world for players with Serena's mind frame.

Take for example Roger Federer, who has just reaffirmed his reign at Wimbledon with a classic triumph over power-playing Andy Roddick.

Federer won the approval of cool and composure, sending his way through tough waters and tame semi-ordinarily.

***

The 22-year-old Swiss, described as the greatest tennis star of his generation, need his rather much like a tennis coach working with a subject.

Federer has been lauded as a perfect gentlemen, a cool cat with no single tattoo to blot his epidermis.

Those who had seen Federer shout enough say the tennis star won't go around with a bodyguard, unless there's by him someone to carry his bag.

"If Sharapova is the teen princess," says the Philsa's unshakable Ajay Ambuh, tennis lover for all seasons, "Federer is the Knight of Wimbledon."

Sorry, if Tantan, dark-tattooed, flaring nostrilled still, won't let loose in cocaine arena, who are we to say that he won't end up hitting the umpire with a racket?

***

With two straight Wimbledon titles, six in succession, 23 straight grasscourt victories and a 5-0 Grand Slam record, all eyes must now be on Federer.

But you know what? The Swiss doing tennis writers could say about the Federer reign was that it has the markings of the legendary domination ensured by the great Mc Enroe.

And the eyes of the tennis world?

Even the other Federer's last Wimbledon triumph, the world is still eyeing Maria Sharapova.

Why? serves reports said she had thrived off frenetic investigators, like politicians and businessmen, from protective operations.

Federer, indeed, could be the next monsters-of-a great heritage.

But Sharapova has aptly been hailed for achieving a "glamour over Wimbledon crown."

"Maria is not only one of the youngest and most gorgeous human beings that ever held a championship trophy," notes sure-stick Dennis Sarcasm. "She's also the most beautiful, best proportioned athlete ever."

The television eye, assures by Sharapova, could not be blamed if it has mesmerized to romance the lovely goddess of the grasscourts.

At least Sharapova herself knows she's not out there to point.

Above all, she must assure her billing as an angel with a devil's kick.

WORLD POOL

Lining, 2 others qualify

MANILA – Filipino cueman Antonio Lining, battling on despite an injured foot, got the better of Taiwanese Liu Kuan-Teng, 9-3, to take his place in George Y. of the 2004 Mr. Bonus Unlimited Championship which starts this Saturday.

Lining's win sends it three out of three for the Philippines following the successes of Marlon Manalo and Rodolfo Luat in yesterday's opening bouts, raising to nine the number of Filipino players in the tournament.

The other six are Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco Bustamante, Alberto Blanco, Lee Van Corteza, Raniel Gallego and Jose "Sonny" Pedia.

The 41-year-old Lining, his left foot raw and sore, had asked organizers to allow him to play yesterday's game here wearing flip-flops.

SPORTSWATCH

Aussie tops Tour 2nd stage

NAMUR, Belgium – Australia's Robbie McEwen sprinted to victory on the 159-km second stage of the Tour de France on Monday while Lance Armstrong opted to save his legs as the race crossed into Belgium. The American, bidding for an unprecedented sixth victory, warned his rivals with a brilliant performance in the prologue and is expected to keep comfortably hidden inside the main bunch until Wednesday's mountainous stage. AGENCE

Abalos secures 3rd term

ABALOS

DUMAGUETE – Governor Jose Paolo E. Abalos is expected to win another three-year term as president of Black Rock Golf & Country Club. Abalos was first elected president of the club in June 2000 and was reelected in 2003. The other elected club officers and committee chairmen are Gabriel L. Villarin, vice president and chair, membership and auxiliary; governor, and legal counsel; Tomasa S. Tan, treasurer and chair, finance; – FAB and honorable committee; Dionisio D. Ca, corporate secretary and chair, club personnel and public development committee; Pablo C. Sison, director and chair, sports and games committee; Leonilo Gian, director and chair, finance and audit committee; Rosmari L. Chavez, director and chair, infrastructure committee; Benjamin G. Cuenca, director and chair, fellowship committee; and Antonio N. Tuason, director.

Sporting arms seminar

MANILA (PNA) – National Shooting Association head coach Christo Marquez will conduct a seminar-workshop on Fundamentals of Trap a Gun of the 2004 Defense and Sporting Arms Show, slated July 8-12 at the Megatrade Hall 2 of SM Megamall, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. The seminar is scheduled on Sunday from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and on Monday from 2:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Media invt'l volleyball

Six broadcast media organizations and eight print media outfits are vowing action in the 2004 SMC Media Invitational Mixed Volleyball Tournament which started last Saturday at the Mandaluyong Sports Complex.

Entered in Division I in the tournament organized by Gen Miguel Corp. are ABS-CBN 2, NBN 4, ANC 11, RPN 9, SBC 13 and radio station FBB. DWIZ is also fielding a team/ team in Division I. Clustered in Division II are Abante, Business World, Daily Tribune, Manila Standard, Manila Times, Philippine Star, Economic Journalists Association and PBA Press Corps.

Derby features 50 matches

FIFTY exciting matches lined up tonight at the tilts on undefeated Las Piñas Commercial Complex and Dagupan Complex at 2000, the derby is hosted by Mayor Binay Aguilar and LPC manager Atty. Edsel. Today's entry fee is P4,000. Meanwhile, the LPC management announced that preregistration of 60 out of 64 teams has been completed for the "Kandilihan Cup 3 on 3 Cock Derby" on Saturday. Derby tilts are taking place at Dagupan Complex and Roman Ilan. For more information, contact 8519000 and 8519010.

Hatawan sa Tag-Ulan an

THE 19TH day of "Hataw sa Tag-Ulan Ni Cock Derby" starts today at Philippine Mega Cockpit with 11 matches on tap. Sponsored by Pagcor and Casino 88 Jaime Fernandez, the derby draw 300 participants as they vie for the P1 million cash prize. The Derby is a three-day elimination round robin affair. Tomorrow matches are scheduled on Friday. Seventeen matches are scheduled on Saturday night, among them Big Matches (Dayday), Red (Sons of Hippy Birthday Greetings), Mang San Pedro (San-6 RSVP), Jun Pinpin (Pinpin Cocks), The Titans (TP Multitech), Jun Cuizona (Super JMJ), Bert Mabi (Cornelio Fernandez) and Hippy Jeremy Patrocinio (JP Scrotwell).

THE PRINCE & ME

In the tradition of "Pretty Woman" and "Notting Hill"

Julia Stiles as Paige Morgan and Luke Mably as Prince Edward in "The Prince & Me"

THE PRINCE & ME is a cinderella story and not Prince Charming because of the fabulous places of fairytales. Here Christian dominates Denmark. The movie itself is a mix feature in more ways than you can imagine.

When we meet this modern day prince of Denmark — whose Shakespearean favorite soul mate is Romeo and inherits Hamlet, in France – played Eadweard Despard, boldly going on a redeeming performance as a spoiled but likeable and insecurely good-looking prince.

Across the Atlantic, Paige Morgan (Stiles) is a single-minded pre-med student who wants to save the third world if she can just get the grades in order to enter Duke's highest.

The prince, who has become bored with the girls back home, is intrigued by a television ad about "The Girls of Wisconsin," who supposedly get drunk every night on campus and take off their tops. Prince Edward decides to go incognito, as just "Eddie" to meet girls hoping to be an exchange student for a year at Paige's college. When Eddie and Paige first meet, it is anything but love at first sight. She is deliciously sarcastic to him, especially after he slightly inebriated her privilege but of "So cold you can't tell if you're in or out." She puts him down on every occasion. Their romance only blossoms quite reluctantly after a couple of chases, regular chemistry and Shakespeare. Soon there is more to each other's talents.

The television script is amazing in the amount of good spirited humor it can derive from such an innocent romance. An intelligent movie, it is a properly rated PG picture that is a hundred times more eminent than her to come to expect from romantic comedies. Both of these leads are the opposite you'd want your kids to meet. Parents couldn't hope for children who grow up to be better than these two. And kids, including teenagers watching the movie will be surprised how much it speaks to and delights them. Even formula films can be special, as this has recently proven.

A commercial and a real prince... can they live happily ever after?

Under tradition of Pretty Woman and Notting Hill comes another fairy tale love story that will surely win your hearts. ● Joe Soto Bravo

PEOPLE at WORK

Editor Raul G. Marcelo
Associate Editor Regina Galang Reyes

A sense of responsibility catapults production leader to success

By Candy G. Villanueva

TERRY is no drama in Hospicio Belmonte's factory. At 28, he got to where he is through honest to goodness hard-working hard work, sheer determination and ingenuity. A Welding Line Team Leader at Toyota Motors Philippines Corp. in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, Belmonte is one of the 2004 Team Members for the Rotary Club of Manila.

Every year, the Rotary Club honors the most outstanding non-supervisory line-caller and white-collar workers of the country. Known as The Outstanding Workers of the Republic (Tower), the award hopes to recognize the contributions of our skilled workers in order to uplift their morale and social status. After all, managers and supervisors alone do not spin the wheels of economic development. In a sense, workers are also leaders since they form the backbone of the Philippine industry. One of those leaders honored by the Tower Awards is Hospicio Belmonte Jr.

Good start

Hailing from the quiet town of Sta. Barbara (Pangasinan), Belmonte graduated cum laude from the Technological University of the Philippines in Ermita, Manila. Determined to help his family, Belmonte took advantage of the school's practicum program and was immediately sent to Toyota Motors in Laguna. He started as Team Member Assembly in 1994 and has been with the company for over 10 years.

Career Tales

Personally, Belmonte is categorized as the Welding Line section of the Production Department, which is part of the Manufacturing Division. Its an ordinary working day would find Belmonte wielding metals through heat. A hardworker and physically taxing job, this cream leader works frequently in rotating shifts (miles and high pressure supervised supervises.

Physically challenging

"Madraso ang trabaho. Physically, not equipped talaga ang production. Mhak is hard. Physically, production is exhausting)," says Belmonte in a flirting voice oblivious of language. Living away from his family, the Bacolodnon focuses his attention on his job.

On his 8 to the morning, he is at work by 7 a.m. to see to work and sometimes to assist on major repair jobs. Work ends at 4 p.m. and he goes straight home. "Pagdating sa bahay bagsak ka na. Pahinga na Saturday at Sunday lang. Dapat kasi maaga para maaga ka. Tapos na ang serbisyo mo at, cede ng bahay mo—trabaho, bahay, pahinga (Where I go home, I rest. Japan. Your rest is only Saturday and Sunday. It was a bit hard on my first years. I just need to rest. That's process, cycle of your life—work, home, rest.)" According to him, he hardly has time to go out.

In spite of the physical challenges, Belmonte still produces the best results. He values effectiveness, dependability and quality in all of his undertakings at work. He is so good at what he does that the company relies on him for special projects that require new tasks or systems.

Quality satisfaction

According to the Belmonte he always considers quality, consistency and safety in his work. This way, he claims, not only does the company benefit but the employees as well. "If you love your work, yahoo mo ang love quality at makaka-ano. Consistent ka at may progreso ng kalidad para (Show the level of quality in your work. Be consistent with the progress of the company)."

Known to be a disciplined person of good character in the company, Belmonte's co-workers look up to him for his employees. "Example ko nga kanyang-ako, kwalawa-at ito ako. Okay naman ang pagsasama namin. Yun ito-bahe, wahaha. Walang inggitan. Nagtulungan sa car ako at process nila. Naghihingi sila ng suggestions para maging maganda process nila at maging mas madaling at safe. Hindi lang para sa akin (I am such-Batangueleno, Bicolanon, etc ... Conviviality a okay. When we work, it is work. There is no jealousy. I also help them in their process. I give them suggestions on how to improve their process and make it better and safe. Not only for me.)"

Continuous improvement

Belmonte goes by Kaizen Master's philosophy of kaizen, which means continuous improvement. According to the Japanese, work becomes effective if the employees are constantly looking for ways to improve work environment and process.

Belmonte believes in the Japanese work principles. "Kaizen ang-ano, kung kailangan magmula ang quality, kailangan magmula dito ang condition ng process at employado (They're right. If quality should be good, the conditions of the process and employee should also be good)," shares Belmonte.

To insure is Belmonte on the concept of kaizen that five out of 10 innovations to improve the workplace every month come from him. In fact, last year, he was able to implement 60 improvements for the processing line of Toyota Motors.

A sample of his ingenuity is the installation of the pneumatic cylinder. With the installation of this new tool, welded parts are automatically ejected. The next step is then performed at the same area. This means the worker no longer needs to carry the heavy products from one place to the other, thus minimizing risks and even exertions. The new process also reduces processing time and cost.

Awards

For his many innovations, Belmonte was awarded a Bronze Medal last year from the Deggenkai Greater Minds Society. In addition, he was also awarded several times as the Team Member with the most number of innovations.

Belmonte is also known for his punctuality. He was commended for his perfect attendance for six straight years. How does one achieve this? "Kung siguro ikaw mo physical talaga na hahe hahoo. (This is hard to imagine because our work is really physical). Love your work lang. Nandyan na rin inspiration mo sa bahay. Kailangan mo magpagod noong first bahay mo sa iyo eh. Pag tinitiwala ka para sa isang pinahiguan ang mga mahal mo sa buhay. (There is also inspiration in life. You really have to work hard because it is your life. If you become busy it's like you are supplying your loved ones as well)," says Belmonte.

His inspirations are all in Baseball. Belmonte's wife is four months pregnant with their first child. He had waited long for this month. He had married only after his career graduated. When his father died in 1999 and his mother retired from teaching, he took over the role of breadwinner and head of the family. Financing his youngest sibling's education, he promised not to marry until he finished his obligations. This sense of responsibility is clearly carried over to his work attitude, which clearly spurred him to his present success.

BIOQUINO

How do you do better job of writing for business?

BLAIR WW: I have a new job where I've got to write a lot of memos and reports. In my previous job, I only had to write a few. I look them over and I'm not sure they're any good. Help me do a bit. I look. Help.

Looking for the Write Way

A Columbus woman who tried to smuggle a handgun into a hospital prison taught me everything I need to know about effective business writing. Oh, she got the gun in just fine. Her problem was getting it out. Her man body, thought, decided to use the gun to paralyze a guard to facilitate escape.

Unfortunately, most of us are like this woman when we write—we know our point so deeply that our readers have to do major surgery just to find it.

Some people's short attention spans, you've got to make your meaning easier to extricate. Here are some tips to help you, for more, check out "Writing Business Letters for Dummies"

Working Wounded

Bob Rosner

(IDG, 1999)

Pointers

When your audience? Business writing should not be like a term paper where you're assigned to write a wide area. It should be like a rifle that shoots one bullet at a specific target. Ask yourself: who is my primary reader? What does the reader need to know about this topic? What's in it for her?

What's your purpose? What do you want to happen as a result of your writing? Do you want your reader to put something on a calendar?

Take an action! Make a decision! Be clear about what you're asking your reader to do, then make sure your writing conveys that clearly. What's your key point? Boil your entire message down to the one point you want your reader to remember and present it as clearly as you can.

Easy reading

What order should your points go in? Put yourself in the shoes of your reader and think through what you need to say first, second, third. Set it aside a few minutes of your target audience before you send something out.

Is your point easy to read? People don't like to be bored, talked down to or buried in pages. That means—make it interesting, don't preach and keep it short.

Is it easy to look at? Skip the fancy typefaces and graphics. Instead, use white space to make your writing easy on your eyes.

Do you have easy-reference for crucial? Typos are like a pothole on your car—they send a loud message that you might not be up to the task. Use a spell-checker as well as your eyes to make sure you've gotten it all done correctly. If you're unsure of your grammar, ask someone else to check it, too. It may be painful to lose your audience because of your message, but it's plain dumb to lose them over a couple of typos.

Ask a pro

Do you have an editor? Be what the pro's do: ask someone to read your writing before it goes out and tell you how to make it stronger.

Writing well is important in business—so "nuts" about it.

(Mr. Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

When one man's weakness becomes his strength

ONE hot day in the early '90s, my friend Ed Lapiz-Lumbres dashed that robot for finished school, he would go out and get himself a "MOLO job."

"What the hell is that?" I said, a true visitor in awe, but Mindanao elder (I liked to be Mayor's friend) was a frequent customer. I was about to start work in an NGO and feeling quite self-righteous.

"You know, just a regular job. I don't want to get rich."

I met Evangelista Saturday a decade hadn't changed the slender poise: sitting, crouched in a cafe, hair short-cropped, eyes and smile still that of a boy, and speech still that of a native dialect almost no one can find just gotten off a mind-blowing cube name. "It's all been good," he said, talking about subjects he'd been and what he'd been up to.

Good? Four short years! Consider: when we were "going out," all this guy cared about was finding out who sang what first semester. In between and finished when Frank's version of Bituin Lang Tatanglit began playing on 90.3 KTI, and getting out of the house, even if it meant driving and driving and driving all the way from Los Baños to Fairview ("Where, mall? Oh, no, never mall"). Everyone around him always wondered about who he'd amount to when he "grew up."

All figured out

Well, it's clear people didn't have to worry after all. In the past five years, he's built two businesses, is starting on his third, and leads a total of over a hundred. He tells me that his close, sweet mother sometimes still asks him: "How did you know...? " And he'd answer, with a shrug that should be patented as his: "I just got it all figured out."

If, you see, his MOLO—Multi-Level Marketing—is easily dismissed.

Working Mom

Gina Abaya-Lumbres

and he constantly has to be doing something, it all clicked when he was diagnosed, and was told that although he had ADHD, he was also gifted with the ability to see patterns in numbers (some quantitative/visual-whatever things). "Also, so that's what I have to do," he remembers thinking. And it was all upbill from there.

Sleepier one for pushing, but it's not overnight. I met someone who looks him as her weaknesses into their biggest strengths—and actually succeeds in, someone is send still messages to keep business as usual unchanged. For the person who structures it, it's a humbling experience in itself. Have you ever, thinking that you've kept your career on an even level, keeping it safe, just sticking to what you love and what you do best, when suddenly, you're reminded that other people have, and are, doing it in a manner so brash and so unlike yours, and accomplishing very little than you ever expected them to accomplish.

"Her advice, dude:

Three things that struck me, hearing it talk—especially the ability to see patterns in numbers and terminology positively jarred with the business advice he was giving:

1. Be fearless. "One thing that got me and my partners in where are now is that we're fearless. If we sense a gap about to pull the plug on us, I come in and go, 'Hey, I'm the guy who plugs your hand sweat and pulls the plug before you.'" (Other business to doesn't be afraid to let go of difficult clients. Your company will always be better off serving someone else.)

2. Be honest. "Whenever I give a talk, I tell them right away I have ADHD. I explain to them what it is. I tell them, 'You'll have to cure your cell-phones off to put them in other mode, or go to the restroom now, because if I get distracted, I won't be able to communicate well with you.' So, you have first admission right away. They listen because they know they'll be losing out on something if they don't." (He admonishes: This also happens to work very much with the girls.)

3. Be prepared. "Thinking a discussion course as I can teach during. Because if every thing goes nearly here, I can pack up and go, 'Screw this, I'm moving to Boracay.' How many reasons are there? If you knock on each one, don't you think you will have a discussion?" (Also to be real as: Don't be afraid to go back to the small small. Don't be afraid to screw yourself. Steal the chicken!: They're there as resources, as no-answers and as technicians, right? Right. That too.)

Good eats

NBI's outgoing editor Francisco Martin Magsaysay and friend Dusty "Organic Queen" Lingsangan-Ig! the former Crazy Onion) just opened Green Onion, an organic shop (and soon-to-be cafe soon) on 26 Magsikwan St., UP Village, Quezon City. We had an organically organic meal last Saturday, which we had. Dusty's gourmet lunch, chicken, turkey, and saffron rice while listening to Bing Abaya crow at the hilarious Tomas Morato restaurant by their veggies and their salads for fresh Goddess Salad Dressing. Congratulations and yours-up, guys!

(Gina Abaya-Lumbres is editor in chief of Reading Time magazine. Feedback is welcome at gina_lumbres@pinoymail.com.)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

BUSINESS

Editor Raoul D. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Martinez

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Exports surged 15.3% to $3.26B in May

By Michiele V Reyes

MERCHANDISE exports in May jumped by 15.3 percent to $3.26 billion, the highest in 18 months, as the electronics sector bounced back from months of disappointing showing to post a double-digit export growth.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri said this was the first double-digit increase in exports since December 2002. He attributed the May performance to the robust growth registered by the country's top three export products—electronics, machinery and transport equipment, and garments.

According to data from the National Statistics Office (NSO), May exports grew to $3.26 billion from $2.82 billion posted in the same month last year. Cumulative exports for the five months to May grew 8.6 percent to $13.43 billion.

The short-circuiting news came from the electronics sector—the country's biggest dollar earner accounting for 46.4 percent of total exports in May—which posted an 18.7 percent growth to $1.54 billion from $1.324 billion last year.

This was the electronics sector's biggest gain since December 2003. The NSO, in a statement, said this should put to rest fears that the industry might remain in a slump after a disappointing performance last year.

"This development is considered well-received by analysts' predictions that consumer electronic products will remain strong this year," said Neri, who is also the director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Neri said the strong export performance in May made the full-year growth target of 10 percent attainable.

Exports of machinery and transport equipment increased 23.6 percent while garment exports, the country's second biggest dollar earner, managed a 3 percent increase to $579.63 million from $562.57 million a year ago.

This was the first time since June 2000 that the garments industry posted growth in exports. Neda said this could be attributed to the Garments and Textile Export Board's Industrial Transformation Plan, a program that aimed to help garment firms lower their costs of doing business and improve productivity to make them survive the quota-free regime starting next year.

Neri noted that exports of machinery and transport equipment rose due to a global surge in automobile and transport demand.

Other top export earners for May included mineral oil, $67.08 million; ignition wiring set and other wiring sets used in vehicles, aircraft and ships, $54.23 million; cathodes and sections of cathodes of refined copper, $53.41 million; semiconductor devices, $52.75 million; metal components, $27.00 million; fresh bananas (bulo), $26.26 million, and pineapple and pineapple products, $13.03 million.

NSO's data showed exports were also boosted by higher demand from the United States, the Philippines' biggest export market. Exports to the US, which accounted for 18.4 percent of Philippine exports, stood at $600.57 million. The figure was 45.6 percent higher from last year's $436.1 million.

Other major markets included Japan, which absorbed 16% (5.2 million worth of Philippine exports; Hong Kong, $317.27 million; Netherlands, $297.58 million; Malaysia, $233.11 million, and Singapore, $232.12 million.

WORKERS assemble voice motor bus for computers at the Japanese company, Sanyo Denki plant in Subic Freeport. Electronics products made up 46.4 percent of total exports in May.

June inflation exceeds target, hits 5.1%

By Michiele V Reyes
and Doris C. Dumlao

THE INFLATION rate rose sharply in June to 5.1 percent, its highest since 2001, exceeding targets and raising concerns over the prospects for limited rate hikes that will keep interest rates at current levels.

The 5.1 percent inflation figure (end 1994 as the base year), according to the National Economic Office (Neda), being a new series with 2000 as the base year, the inflation rate in June reached 5.4 percent.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said the country could expect higher inflation rates in the coming months due to impending increases in wages and power rates.

"The YoY increase in the National Capital Region's daily minimum wage in July may contribute from six other regions, and the power rate hike arising from the increase in Napocor (National Power Corp.) generation charges are expected to significantly influence inflation," said Economic Planning Secretary and Neda Director General Romulo Neri.

The inflation rate in May was 4.5 percent, using 1994 as the base year. The rate for the six months to June hit 4.1 percent.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, however, allayed fears of a runaway inflation following the 22-month high hit in June.

"We do not expect this sharp spike to continue given economic fundamentals for a long period," Buenaventura said, noting that the upswing in local prices was due to adverse weather conditions which were unpredictable.

"Short appreciation of food grains and selected meat products after a price rise seems to be second half of 2004, the supply will ease and food prices are expected to stabilize at lower levels," he said.

The BSP, which uses inflation as a basis for setting interest rates, earlier kept its overnight borrowing rate at 6.75 percent and overnight lending rate 9 percent. The rates were unchanged since July last year.

Despite fears of an accelerated inflation growth, Neri said the government could still achieve at least the high-end of the 4- to 5-percent inflation target for the year with the expected decline in oil prices. Oil production of countries belonging to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is expected to expand in August, he said.

"The Monetary Board sees

Gov't raises ₱5.9B from sale of retail bonds

By Michelle V. Rono

12 RTBs were one too many takers of Retail Treasury Bonds yesterday as the government raised only ₱5,900 billion out of the more than ₱10 billion that it wanted.

The government yesterday began auctioning off three- and five-year RTBs.

It generated ₱2.595 billion from the sale of the three-year RTBs, and another ₱3.25 billion from the five-year bonds.

RTBs, unlike regular treasury bills and bonds, are sold for as low as ₱5,000 each to encourage small investors to directly invest in government securities.

Government securities are considered among the safest investment instruments because the government guarantees payment upon maturity.

The Bureau of Treasury issued

FIGUEROA

the RTBs to widen the market for government securities and help boost economic activity.

Despite the low coupon (return) rate, the BTr remained confident that it would still raise the total amount P10 billion by the July 16 deadline to sell RTBs.

Going Monday's auction of treasury bills, the government rejected bids for 182- and 364-day securities as the volume was low and banks sought high interest rates.

The Treasury said the banks' behavior could indicate they were preparing for the issuance of the RTBs.

The Treasury anticipated a high demand for RTBs, as ₱90 billion worth of small denominated treasury bills and bonds were set to mature this month.

Investors, thus, should be on the lookout for alternative investments.

Banks purchase the RTBs from the government, but they are required to sell at least 40 percent of their holdings to retail investors.

This was an increase from the previous 35 percent, according to National Treasurer Milo Figueroa.

"We are now strictly implementing the rule. Banks that will not comply with the 40-percent requirements sales requirement will be blacklisted, meaning they can no longer buy RTBs in the future," said Figueroa.

The national treasurer said the minimum sales requirement was raised to make sure that the RTBs benefit small investors.

He said the Treasury would require banks to submit a report on how much of the RTBs they sold and to whom.

"We are giving them the 40-percent requirement because those [RTBs] are not meant for the banks but for retail investors," Figueroa told reporters in a press briefing after yesterday's auction.

Japanese bank to provide funds for SMEs

By Bernie W. Damings

TOKYO (AP) Bank for International Cooperation has pledged funds to support the government's program to develop small and medium enterprises.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said yesterday that the JBIC was willing to provide technical assistance to SB Corp., the agency tasked to nurture SMEs by providing financial and technical assistance.

Purisima said he met recently with Osamu Watata, JBIC chief representative in Manila, and asked for the lender's help in providing U.S. natural and technical aid for SMEs that will engage in manufacturing.

"Most of the country's SMEs are middlemen," he said. "The government intends to channel the Filipino's entrepreneurial spirit in the manufacture of goods to increase the country's output."

Purisima said the local business sector is priority sector that needs funds.

"[Firms in food manufacturing] need to have refrigerated warehouses and packaging facilities to prevent hazardous food-spoilage and increase their exports capability," he added.

Purisima said, however, that JBIC loans intended to support the SMEs would not be available until next year as loans programmed for 2004 were almost used up.

The DTI chief said he has already requested for JBIC to help set up "incubation" offices that would provide SMEs with advice on finance and marketing.

"Small businesses in Japan are successful because of the proper guidance and starting of such offices," he said.

"We want the help of Japanese experts in setting up model incubation offices that would guide business start ups until they can run on their own," he added.

June . . .

From page B1

raise the nature of the latest inflation process. In a policy meeting held on July 1, the board noted that the upward in inflation in recent months was driven mainly by supply-side factors such as the rise in the prices of food products, increase in the domestic pump prices of gasoline and other oil products and the adjustments in transport fares," Buenaventura said.

"The impact of these supply-side factors is expected to be transitory," he said.

The BSP chief also said the perceived supply-created price pressures were likely to be tempered by the persistence of resource slack given the relatively high unemployment rate as well as the lack of strong pick-up in bank lending.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that June inflation was primarily brought about by increase in prices of food, housing and repairs (H&R), fuel, light, and water (FLW), and services.

The inflation rate for services reached 3.2 percent, the highest recorded since November 2001. Increase in the prices of food products up 3.7 percent, while that of FLW more upward by 6.1 percent.

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CAP-tive

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista is understandably reassuring their dear relatives asked about the prospects of a turnaround of industry pioneer College Assurance Plan.

She has to, since the Securities and Exchange Commission, chief of appointing itself as a reviewer, has reversed not only an overnight board chaired by a former SEC commissioner, Danilo Concepcion, to oversee CAP's finances but also installed an SEC accountant as CAP comptroller to handle day-to-day fund disbursements.

The SEC has had to administer the bitter medicine after CAP's external auditor, in an unusually frank and thorough report, raised "substantial doubts about the company's ability to continue as a going concern."

At the risk of his professional reputation, the auditor, Antonio Constantino, even assured CAP whose board has been ashamed with such illustrious names as Macapagal, Manglapus and Roces, of pulling off a P9.67 billion recovering imprudences to mask its real 2003 financial condition.

Still, the positive twist, as spelled out by the SEC chief, is that CAP has adequate real estate and other assets that can be unloaded to create future multi-billion peso liabilities. And, according to Bautista, CAP still has enough liquid assets to cover this year's and perhaps even next year's pre-need maturities.

As a last resort, CAP is even talking to foreign investors, white knights, vodka, in the event, knock on wood, that its eight-year turnaround program fails to meet the SEC approval targets.

So far, the initial nuptials have not been encouraging.

In addition to posting a 2003 net loss of P2.71 billion, from P403 million net loss in 2002, CAP's revenue base has been shrinking, to P1.20 billion from P2.27 billion in 2002.

Its main driver of growth, profit from sale of plans, shrank to P961.4 million in 2003 from P922.1 million in 2002 while the cost of plan benefits, payments to its college scholars, increased to P2.850 billion from P1.86 billion in 2002.

CAP even borrowed short-term last year, at 14.75 to 16 percent annual interest, a total of P134.5 million from the Bank of Commerce, Philippine Veterans Bank, and from a stockholder, still, despite its cash crunch, CAP lent P169 million in 2003 and P139.6 million a year earlier for the working capital requirements of Maribel, an affiliated securities agency.

It also lent P117 million to its cash-strapped affiliate, Camp John Hay Development Corp., in order to finish a number of big cabins in the Baguio resort.

But even this modest accommodation, payable in 10 equal monthly installments beginning mid-July 2003 at a yearly interest rate of 16 percent, Camp John Hay site defaulted.

But that is another story.

Unprintable PLDT cartel

PLDT prides itself for having introduced its secret bidding for its multi-billion peso supply requirements.

But even in such basic and seemingly straightforward thing as the printing of annual report, the two-envelope and electronic bidding procedures are apparently still from a select group of long-time suppliers.

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. this year re-awarded out the printing requirement for 1.5 million copies of its 2003 annual report.

Last year, after a "competitive" Internet solicitation, the winning bid for the print job cost PLDT roughly P50 per copy.

Do you know how much PLDT had to pay for this year's annual report?

Despite the continued peso depreciation, higher cost of paper, ink and electricity, the winning bid went down to only about P30 per copy.

Imagine the surprise of a top assistant of PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan at the P20-million savings. And to think that this assistant even had to beat down on the purchasing department, after the latter initially balked at including a new printing company in the bidders' shortlist.

MVP buys, sides sell

ASK speaking of PLDT, chair Manuel V. Pangilinan has been steadily buying PLDT shares from the market in what is apparently part of MVP's long term accumulation strategy.

Meanwhile, a number of top PLDT officers have been selling the stock and presumably taking profit, although after a decent interval post-MVP buys.

For example, corporate secretary Maria Lourdes Rosario Client reported disposing of 1,300 shares at P1,175 and P1,200 Friday, while first vice president Florencio Mabasa Jr. sold 1,000 shares at P1,201 and P1,200 on Monday.

In contrast, MVP paid as much as P1,200 a share last year for his own pension pile.

The chief of the network management section, first vice president Rhodie Cenzon, is even luckier. Early in May, he sold 500 shares at P1,165, only to pick them up three weeks later, at P834 each.

Heard through the grapevine

IN CASE you have not noticed, Pilipinas has completely divorced itself out of the cement business, which it has made so for years since the '50s. The conventional, aggressive company now has refocused itself on energy, education and affordable housing.

(Email: outvalue_ph@yahoo.com or outvalue_ph@hotmail.com.)

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Makati hotels post higher occupancy rate

OAKMARK in general opportunities, guests continued to flock into Makati's posh luxury hotels in the height of election season despite the heavily contested presidential homestretch. In fact, occupancy in these establishments during the first month were a significant improvement over last year's figures.

All the seven hotels in Makati surveyed from the defined deep inflected in 2003 and posted an average occupancy rate of 71 percent in May this year, a 20-percent increase from the 2003 figures.

Even more phenomenal, Hotel Nikko Hotel Manila, one of the few performing properties in the hospitality industry posted its highest occupancy rate since it opened five years ago. Occupancy registered at 87 percent in May.

Rudy Ong, vice president for the hotel sales and marketing, according to Al Laguna, Oakwood marketing manager. During the first half of the year, certain hotels, particularly those in the central business district, were happily asked "and considered all possible reservations."

For January to May 2004, Oakwood's monthly average occupancy rate was a high 83 percent. Industry average occupancy rate in Makati for January to May 2004 was 71 percent and averaged 69 percent for 2003.

Laguna attributed the higher than expected turnout of guests to increased confidence in the country from certain sectors. On the other hand, companies involved in a number of new and emerging industries continued to see the viability of relocating or expanding their operations in the country for reasons.

Companies that had considered a presence were not overly concerned or worried about the election exercise and continued to do business in the country. Moreover, some of Oakwood Premier's regular patrons are embassy servants which are seemingly unaffected by political movements.

PNOC-EDC gets ₱1.5-B loan

By Brigid L. Ho

TIPAN

THE PHILIPPINE National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) has signed a ₱1.5-billion loan agreement with the Land Bank of the Philippines for its rural electrification projects.

With this loan, Landbank president and chief executive Gary Tiron said PNOC-EDC could now proceed with the energization of 700 barangays all over the country.

The, he said, was also consistent with the administration's thrust to help uplift the lives of Filipinos, particularly those living in the rural areas.

The project, which aims to provide electricity to some 700 unelectrified barangays throughout the country, is not only consistent with Landbank's mandate to improve the lives of rural folks, but is also expected to have a significant impact on the lives of the rest of the Filipinos, he said in a statement.

The loan agreement, signed July 2, would support the government's overall expanded rural electrification program, which aimed to provide electricity to all barangays by 2006.

This rural electrification effort is the part of the government's poverty alleviation programs, hoping to win with President Macapagal-Arroyo's vow to give every Filipino access to electricity and basic needs.

Over the years, financial constraints had hampered the government from fully accelerating its rural electrification program.

According to estimates, between ₱1 million and ₱1.5 million is needed to provide electricity to one barangay.

The newly signed loan agreement, Tiron said, would then help address some of the government's funding requirements for rural electrification.

So far, PNOC-EDC has energized 304 barangays in Leyte, Samar, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Mindoro, Batangas and Cavite.

The state firm has committed to provide electricity to 627 more barangays from 2004 to 2006, pursuant to government efforts to fast-track geothermal projects in place.

IMI expanding share in global EMS market

BANGALORE-Microelectronics Inc., a leading electronics manufacturing services (EMS) provider to some of the world's largest original equipment manufacturers, recently hooked up its IT investments to enhance its competitiveness in the global EMS market.

IMI has acquired SAP® solutions to consolidate and streamline the company's core business processes such as manufacturing, materials management, plant and quality maintenance, business workflows and customer relationship management (CRM) to better compete with other top global EMS companies (US$200 million to $1 billion revenue brackets) as today's demand for electronics manufacturing outsourcing dramatically accelerates worldwide.

IMI is a one-stop EMS company providing a wide range of services including design and product development, prototyping, printed circuit board assembly, materials sourcing and supply chain management.

"We are leveraging on best-in-class technology solutions to enable us to execute our business strategies through innovations in our business processes," said Andrew Cardoza, IMI's chief information officer.

Through its implementation journey beyond 2004, IMI will have completely deployed by December this year mySAP™ Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)—a software solution suite of leading-edge self-service and other capabilities. Moreover, finance, capital management, operations and corporate services applications.

"We are confident that mySAP™ ERP will enhance IMI's flexibility and efficiency in responding to stakeholders' needs," said Cardoza, pointing out that in the highly competitive electronics and semiconductor industries, it is very critical for any player to quickly respond to changing customer requirements and can mean the difference between success and failure.

Embraced by industry experts, customers and key investors based on more than 30 years of SAP's experience, mySAP ERP supports business intelligence, knowledge management and enterprise portals to help achieve a company's optimum value. It can also be integrated seamlessly with other SAP® solutions.

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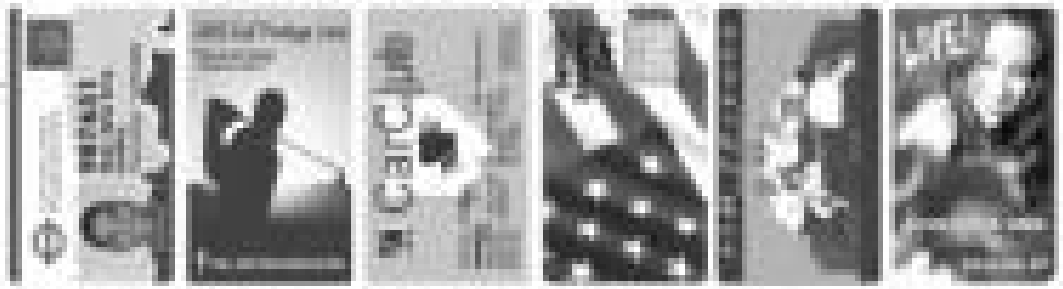

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DISCLOSURES

Fil-Prime Holdings Corp. signed an agreement with Project Spirit Corp., Diamond Realty Corp. and other individual members of the Barangay Association of EPZ Intensified Inc. to further expand the company's economic zone.

BACNOTAN CONSOLIDATED INDUSTRIES INC. declared a special cash dividend of P6 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Sept. 30 and will be payable on or before Sept. 30.

S. SYCIP CORP. 's 500,000 shares were bought by its wholly owned subsidiary, Sycip Consolidated Corp.

ATLAS Corp. will merge MVC Holdings and Manila Mining Company into it in the latter as the surviving company.

MEMBERS of **Global Investment Corp.** 's nomination committee are Washington Sycip, Chairman/Director, Antonio Cuyugan and Jesus Ng. Members of the executive and compensation committee members are Ty-ka, Bruce and Lisa Lim. Audit committee members are Peter Lee, Bruce Lim and Alice Kuhn.

MEMBERS of **City & Land Development Inc.** are Mabel Arrastia Cuyugan, Stephen Pascua, Andrew Lizares and Jesus Ng. Remuneration and compensation committee members are Cuyugan, Bruce and Lizares while audit committee members are Cuyugan, Grace Lizares and Alice Kuhn. *Compiled by Marissa Nakpil, PDI Research*

Lim elected new PSE president

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Lim

THE HEREDIA Godfrey case.

The Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) yesterday named one of its own non-broker directors, Francisco Lim, as its new president replacing Cayetano Padirogan Jr.

Lim, 46, is a senior partner at Angara Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz Law Firm. He became an independent director of the PSE last year and was chair of the board's governance committee.

Should he accept the post within 10 days, Lim would be the seventh PSE president under the modified Brady and Bradley stock exchanges.

Lim was elected by eight out of the 11 directors in a special board meeting held yesterday. Lim abstained from the voting.

"It is a great honor that carries an awesome responsibility," Lim said in a press conference.

Lim yesterday laid out his initiatives as PSE president, stating he will assert the agency's self-regulatory status and ensure the treatment of brokers and investors.

He said he would also do away with double investigations of non-compliance among traders.

"Some brokers have complained of double investigation," Lim said. "we owe no apology. We will propose to the SEC to give PSE a chance to investigate people and neglect to a domestic media clipping [the crying trading participants]."

Lim asked for a 30-day respite to allow the board to check on possible conflicts of interest, and to get clearance from his law partners. He said he is associated with a law firm that has various board memberships clients.

"I want to ... tell those clients that once I wear this new hat, they should not expect any favor from me," Lim said.

The PSE named incumbent director and trader Dewi Pardo as officer-in-charge (OIC) by 9 until Lim assumes the post.

Globe seeks to amend debt notes

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. yesterday said it was seeking the consent of its holders to amend the terms of its 2012 debt notes so it could increase its dividend payout and issue more of the 10-year paper.

Delfin Gonzalez, Globe chief finance officer, said the company would like to amend provisions directing the Ayala-controlled phone firm not to pay more than 50 percent of its net income as dividends and to limit any additional bond issue to no more than $ 625 million.

The listed company controlled by Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom, wants to issue $200 million debt papers and pay more than 50 percent of its net income as dividends to common shareholders.

Gonzalez said the phone company could do some pre-funding to raise the money for its planned capital expenditures in 2005. This year, Globe had raised enough funds to finance its $338 million expansion program for 2004.

Globe said it would spend a total of about $25,000 to pay holders of bonds due in 2012. This way, Globe officials said, the noteholders might agree to relax the terms of the bonds sold in April 2002.

The restrictions in the 2002 bond issue were meant to protect the creditors and ensure that the company would have enough funds to redeem the 10-year bonds upon maturity.

"We want to put in place some amendments that would give us some flexibility," Gonzalez said in an interview. "There is a provision mentioning no more paying more than 50 percent of our net income as dividends."

The Globe official said the move should benefit holders of Globe shares as they, dividends too, would increase.

Last year, Globe used half of its P10.1 billion net income to pay out dividends.

"If we want to increase our dividends, we have to have the terms amended," said the Globe finance officer. "This should benefit all our shareholders including the public."

Globe said it would be seeking the consent of bondholders until July 26. Gonzalez said the company only needed to solicit consent from lenders representing half of the $200 million issue size.

The company had dropped having hired UBS and its affiliates as soliciting agents.

Globe may have an easier time securing the nearly $1 billion debt as Standard & Poor's last month to BB plus from BB.

The telecom carrier is the only Philippine company listed by S&P for potential upgrade this year.

A rating or outlook upgrade tends to bring down the cost of the rated firm's borrowing as it indicated less risks, giving investors less reason to demand a higher return for their placements.

We were going to perform on MTV for the first time, and our shot at immortality rested on it.

Text by Raul Pascual
Photos by Raymond Fabul
Contributor

A FEELING of overwhelming anxiety drove me out of bed far earlier than on most days, and with good reason. We were going to perform on MTV for the first time, and our shot at immortality rested on it. Although our job was merely to provide entertainment for the early birds, nervousness somehow found its way into my system.

The whole day ended up as a blur. We arrived at the PICC for our date with destiny. We entered with our entourage of real-live friends, all of whom were eager to see how we would fare in front of the MTV crowd.

By noon-ish, as traffic wasn't up to its usual form, the two Aizzonne-related problems were overcome: Mike Agustin and Pamela Milsang led us to the dressing room we were sharing with Bamboo and Yeng Constantino.

Like it does on the first day of school, we

Onstage at the MTV Pilipinas awards

From page F1

applause) the victory as a unit. As luck would have it, we were seated ourselves in front of the host. Two steps later, the realization that I was supposed to be covering the event kicked in. I escaped from the position as a standee, dusted off and started walking around, interviewing people.

Big names strolled down the hallway. I felt like Ogie Alcasid was on one end, Randy Santiago on the other, Sarah Meier, a glistening screen, Michael V. wearing his goofy glasses, Rhyn Abaya seated on a chair—all within a span of thirty seconds.

I walked over to Paolo Ramos and asked the first question that came into my head.

"How are you feeling?"

"Overwhelmed!"

He must have been. He would later be joining Barbie's Cradle, Myer Roberts and Jimmy Bondoc onstage to play an all-in-one-tribute-to-Eraserheads medley.

I was asked to return to the dressing room by our managing fraylah, but was before I got the chance to run back to the room, I was stopped by Spongecola to perform "Kelly Clarkson and Miss Lieshout of Sony Music gave me words of encouragement, and I was off.

Onstage, I was engulfed by the sound of an electrified guitars. When it's the only sound you could hear, it's a different story altogether. I relied solely on my internal metronome and Chris' bass notes locking me up as Marianne Evangelista.

I didn't have any semblance of a stage show. I was no "third dimension." I failed in concert. I lost a string early. I was thankful however, for the gamble that MTV made. They gave us artists allowing a relatively young, rhythm, independent band to perform on their prestigious, grandiose awards night.

Put on the back

After my brush-and-bow performance, people started piling up and I had to get rid of the impulse over-eye so as complete my other task for the night. Ely Buendia, who later presented the best video award alongside Sidney Miller, handed it off. He gave me a pat on the back and said that it was fun. Bono H. Gail, manager of The Mongols, gave me his usual nod of approval.

Cindy P delivered a high-energy vocals-bursting performance to festivally open the show, along with a plethora of dancers.

Backstage, Nathan Azarcon of Rakrakan was alongside headliners Iya Cruz, both quite eager to perform. Vic Manuel was fluttering about the dressing room, Iza Zipon of Chinese and Bay Babes of Cebu-bombs were there as well, hanging out with the rest of Rakrakan. Plugs were quite a happy bunch.

Just as was dancing backstage, preparing to perform, a new wave of excitement dawning in such a crowded place. It hit me then. I was at MTV Pilipinas '06, for few people have that privilege. Oh, and I was able to see Bob Geldof, too.

Performances like Jay R's version, Sarah Geronimo's duet with Gary Valenciano, and Mike's solo opened up the room, for nothing could compare with Rakrakan.

They brought the house down with their stellar performance of the anthemic "Harya," backed by what seemed like sixty backdancers on the stage, which made them that.

Everything came back to normal as the end of the day. Like all good things, the event came to a close, a closure, and with a closed a realization in my musical career: Yeah, I was onstage.

SKYROCKETING. That's what's happening to the band's career and album sales.

BAMBOO you can drive my car!

Blessed be Bamboo

With all the raves these guys have been receiving, I'm sure flying kisses have been sent to God

THE GANG is currently on its way up the success mushroom.

By Nito Mark M. Sabido
INLY Correspondent
Photos by Chito Reales

AND so one rainy afternoon I find myself sharing a table with the boys of Bamboo.

Seated on the "father's chair" and not on one of the boy's laps, I press my recorder's REC button and dive bluntly into my blank notebook which should have contained at least one question.

But list of inimical words active and still no questions. After a short while, the silence makes me feel awkward stupid, so I blurt out the usual and expected questions that unfortunately make me feel and look even more stupid.

Photos of newborn rare weeks or two and I give up on the interview.

And then Nathan shares how that "Sweetheart Ritz" song has been playing on his head for what seems an eternity.

And then Bamboo coughs.

I tell the band that their album's as No. 3 on Odyssey's top 10 albums list, the Sex Bomb Dancers' "Bomb Thems" at No. 1.

Nathan regrets naming the band Bamboo instead of Sex Bamboo.

He sings the chorus of that hit jazz jingle which has taken over his existence.

Everyone then picks on Nathan for being Mr. Make-up during photo shoots.

And then Bamboo coughs again.

It's explains how it's hard to dress up in the Philippines because of the weather, but that he's happy Hallmarcon's just around the corner because that's one time he can wear skirts and whatever.

Nathan reveals he digs Carmi Martin and that he sends a shout to her. "Tonight with Nathan and Carmi."

He says he's been listening to samples of resulting leaps, song stickers and other exotic audio clips for a new project.

And then Bamboo coughs for the fourth time. Or is that the third time?

Whatever.

Nathan reminisces about his school life once upon a time, when he was taking up Education and his teacher asked him why the hell he was wasting his time on playing music.

The band thinks of songs to remix. Madonna's "Crazy for You" and "La Isla Bonita," Butch Miranda's "Because of You," Ben Justo's "Keep the Faith" and Marco Sison's "Forever" all come up.

He talk about the band's participation in the Good Year Eagle F1 Battle of the Bands 2004. Not only are they performing five songs on finals night, they sang the "Pit Music Player" was also handpicked as the competition's theme song.

And then, all of a sudden, the interview is put to a halt to give way to the photo shoot.

We know what remained of the drinks and head to the locations.

Rain drizzles.

With all the blessings the Bamboo guys have been receiving, I'm sure flying kisses have been sent to God.

I, on the other hand, am sending my flying kisses to my God for coming up with something out of the sweet interview in my life.

FRESH BUT TWO. Bamboo has established its unique brand of rock this early.

The Good Year Eagle F1 Battle of the Bands 2004 is open to all school bands/bands.

Entries should contain one amazing cover and an original (single required by Good Year Eagle F1, and must be submitted on or before July 13 at Apogee Production Unit, 3705 Ayala Tower, Legaspi St., Pasay City. Call 7227888 or 7220620 for details.

Battle of the Good Year Eagle F1 Bands 2004 Grand Finals on July 17 at Music Museum.

Beauty lite

Know the items you need for every occasion, and cut to the minimum what you require to look fabulous

SHU Uemura Lolishine Rouge

As MUCH as I want to stay around a lifetime's worth of cosmetics, my aching back will not allow it.

So I've decided to work on a simple formula: throw the items you need for every occasion, recycling them to the barest minimum to look fabulous.

With plenty of practice and a lot of "trial-and-horror", I'm proud to say that I can do with one—yes, just one item for any occasion under the sun—or the moon. I am also sharing with you some true makeup gems that will lighten your load.

Here are my top picks for when you have only 30 seconds on the your face or can't afford to lug around a gigantic makeup kit.

Lips

The one for a fresh everyday look. I suggest some tinted balm or gloss with a very light formula to make your lips look soft and supple.

This is especially important for women who like keeping their faces bare. Super-shine your doesn't go with a fresh-scrubbed face, don't you think?

I am extremely hooked on Montine Pink Magic. The packaging doesn't spell "grown-up sophisticate"—it has roses and a young girl—but it will appeal even to those past pre-teen.

I have to admit it was the silvery tone that got me, as the clear balm turns pink when applied, but you'll get addicted because the texture is feather-light and shine-ish won't make you look like you HAVE on Lippy candy.

The one for a daytime workdown. If you have a beach date or pre-sunset gimmick, you can opt for a little more glam. But you want high-impact drama, not Vivaz Intense red lipstick on.

Go for color with just enough shine. You'll love the Innisfree Lollishine Rouge in a compact lipstick color. I like to think of it as a "stronger" Rouge 4. It looks like lipstick, but doesn't feel like one nor does it make your lipstick look, well, lipstick-ed.

It's shiny without gloss; vivid but sheer. My favor is 334, a rose pink that brightens my face up in a snap.

The One for a hot night out. Turn the color up, shine, and shimmy.

Vanity Fair

Irene Gabriel

Know that you're ready to party when you have a lip color that makes you look like you HAVE on Lippy candy.

Try Shu Uemura Lolishine Rouge in a compact lipstick color. I like to think of it as a "stronger" Rouge 4. It looks like lipstick, but doesn't feel like one nor does it make your lipstick look, well, lipstick-ed.

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The One for a hot night out. Turn the color up, shine, and shimmy.

Try engine red lipstick has proven its power, but the best to hit glam. Throw in in my point. Our young things need it in their beauty arsenal. Lunchbox Juicy Tubes—a Hollywood and runway fave, and, mind, yours, too.

It's another sexy deep-dead red, but it has one frill...Juicy Tube glazed with shine that won't quit will be on the Most Wanted list.

Cheeks

The one for a just-plucked look. For every day, when I can't muster a minute's primping, I grab a bottle of cheek stain and let it do its magic.

I've been a fan of Liquid blush since I realized I'm one of those people who need color on their faces. Lately, I've been partial to "bubbly" makeup. My everyday selection for the past month is Bioline Candy Pure and Lip Tint, particularly a lovely reddish-pink, that I can apply even when I am in a moving vehicle.

The best part? It's a steal at P150.

The one for a baby-doll face. While I love the natural flush look, there are times when I want to look like I have wrapped out of a fairy tale.

Know the items you need for every occasion, and cut to the minimum what you require to look fabulous.

An afternoon soiree and other bright-and-pretty occasions require bronzer-to-goodness pink. The one I love the most is Maybelline Pure Blush in Dearly Rose. It gives a serious candy glow on my face and is especially lovely with a dusting of shimmer powder on the apples of the cheeks.

The one for dive-dens. For the highest level of glam, get a bronzer/blush set that doesn't just keep you in the pink, but makes you shine like a good way, of course) as well!

For dinner and dancing, you might want to go the Bronzer way and use shimmer. The body shop Bronzing Waves is perfect for Pinay skin. But oilstained ones and those who want to tone down their tans can go for the Blushing Waves or Shimmer Waves.

Mistine or Mitsi Cosmetics, Independent Lifestyle Wig, Rockwell Power Plant Mall, Dia Cosmetic or Human Market and Shangri-La Plaza, Juicy Tubes at Human's, Maybelline at PCS and department stores, The Body Shop at all major malls

E-mail the author at yah_rami_tolero@hotmail.com or Irene_gabriel@yahoo.com

In love with her best friend's BF

Nitto Marie Zubiaga & Septemober Madrinan

DEAR Mark and Sep,

Hi. I'm a freshman and I am desperate for your advice. There's this junior student at school that I'm crushing on, and lately, I realized that it's not just a crush, it's already love.

We've good friends and we text each other. But recently, something broke my heart. I found out he has a girlfriend and what's worse, his girlfriend is my best friend. When my best friend tells about him, I feel jealous.

Is he for me? Should I keep on waiting for him? Should I stop? Be everything just because of him? Our friendship is at stake here and I really don't know what to do. Please help me.

LIGHTNESS

As much as I want to say that I trust you and that I believe in what you feel, I instead have to grab you by the shoulders and shake you violently while screaming, "It's not love!"

Poor you for not being his girlfriend. (Look at my wardrobe.) Poor you for being the best friend of his girlfriend. (Look at my other wardrobe.) Of course, you feel jealous! If you didn't feel a little like Ni-

Chat Box 24/7

na Ill after you unexpectedly get hands on completely burnt.

Let our rational say favorite finger and burst your bubble. Obviously none he is not for you. You might feel a little delusional these days, but I hope you'll soon realize that your crush is for his girlfriend. If he wanted you, he'd be building you another text bar.

Bid to, don't wait for him. I strongly believe nothing will happen even if you wait for him. And no, don't sacrifice even a single thing. Don't be Dots-dont Marie of the Universe 2004.

The friendship are to take over there, but remember a bunch of things before you make a scene at the cafeteria. Your crush line the right to not have a crush on you. Your best friend has the right to be his girlfriend if she values their relationship more than your friendship, and lastly, you have the right to be happy.

So go crush on someone else. Someone owner, wider and more evolved. Or look for someone who likes you in return.

MARK

Few things first: Did the guy ever give you any notion that the two of you could be more than just friends? Because the question "Is he for me?" is an obvious that you just anybody would ask.

You ask as if there were a serious chance that what you want to happen would happen. You cannot as if you are willing to consider putting this guy first before your best friend's because you know that the time to choose between them would come, sooner or later.

Only someone who is as sure of her place would dare ask those questions. Either that...or someone who is too immature to handle the repercussions.

I don't know your situation enough to call you delusional. But whether or not the guy minded you, you thinking that you had a chance with him, here's one thing to remember. He is your best friend's relationship more than your best friend, and lastly, you have the right to be happy.

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It is fine to admit you're jealous. Who wouldn't? However, when you start thinking of your friend's ugly underwear at clubs...then something's wrong with the picture.

It's never take to get in between two people who are in an existing relationship, and it's just horrific to even think of hunting a friend just because of a guy. That applies even if there is a chance that the guy would turn out to be your guy.

Don't wait for him. Obviously he's not for you. What you need to do is accept things the way they are, swallow your love and grow up. Or you can, you'll have many worthy boys to fall in love with.

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the writers at mailto:chatbox@yahoo.com. Chatboxers is looking for a sensitive male or if they want their e-mail address printed as nonsense blurbs and sign our show ant jar in touch with problematic readers and send in their comments and advice.

Learn to conquer fear and anger

"BEYOND Fear, Beyond Pain" is the subject of a lecture by Dr. Hemalo Kajaria, Australia-based medical doctor, and international yoga teacher and lecturer.

Many of Dr. Hemalo's yoga meditation students are young professionals and artists. Her body-mind-soul lectures take her annually to all the continents of the world.

"Sometimes everywhere have one thing in common," she says. "They are made up mostly of people who compare and compete. Everybody wants to control everybody else, or else be taken as better than the next person."

Her diagnosis: sickness of the soul. And she doesn't mean the usual paranoia or schizophrenia.

"Take anger, for instance. It is not normal," Dr. Hemalo explains. "Nobody wants to have to deal with anger, or be around an angry person."

Her prescription: peace and love. "That's what everybody wants and needs for. That's what's natural. Now, many think peace is the absence of war. That's true, too. But let's think in terms of the war that goes on in our minds: anger, greed, sorrow in general. This is true."

Worse, the doctor-teacher says people find a hundred and one ways to take sorrow every single day. "I was not ambitious. I was not misled at. I was overlooked..."

DR. KAJARIA lectures on yoga meditation July 9 and 14.

Moreover, it is a sickness that burdens everybody around the sufferer, says Hemalo. "People are willing to help with a physical problem. But when someone is depressed or mean, even his friends and relatives want to run away."

A daily dose of meanness like this builds up to chronic fear and pain for whole groups of people. Thus, the lecture set on Friday, July 9, starting at 6:30 p.m. sharp, at The Ballroom, Mandaluyong Rizale, 324 Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

On Wednesday, July 14, Dr. Hemalo will also speak at Inner Space, 3/F CDC Bldg., 1150 Maria Orosa, Ermita Manila. The subject is "I Am Well (Wellness In A Chaotic)."

Both programs are a public service of Brahma Kumaris, and are open to the public free of charge. Call 8927950, 9049421 or 5213015.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LIFESTYLE

All-natural sound

By Maria Caresina Borromeo Baron
INQ7 Correspondent

Ask an ordinary person about the hiphop scene in the Philippines, and you'll get mixed comments about Salbakota, Andrew E., or any one of those ubiquitous rappers that seem to flood local radio stations with their songs.

What the ordinary person doesn't know is that there's another side to Filipino hiphop, another sound and another style. And that's where artists like BVC come in.

BVC is not just for hiphop fans.

Sun Valle Crew's latest album is a boot shakin' addition local hipl music

Candies for your feet

LA Gear unveils its new line of candy-colored canvas sneakers for school or work.

As comfortable as they are fashionable, the LA Gear Canvas shoes are available in three colors: apple green, peach and blue.

For a pair of colorful LA Gear Canvas sneakers for only P750, and get a free ethnic shoelace. LA Gear Boutique branches are at Glorietta 4, Robinsons Place Manila, SM North Edsa, SM Southmall and Ayala Center Cebu.

The brand is also carried by leading department stores like SM, Robinsons, Rustans, The Landmark and Sta. Lucia East.

LA Gear specialty stores are in Sports Central, Cinderella, Toby's, Royal Sporting House, Planet Sports, Athlete's Foot, Olympic Stiliggs and Little Users.

Cool tops for cool dudes

DUCKS Unlimited's all-weather shirts can make any young man appealing. Classic, elegant, designed for ease and comfort, these cool tops are a sure must-see.

Ducks Unlimited offers a locally-manufactured line of shirts, pants, shoes and jackets for men, women and children, made of 100-percent Egyptian cotton for that cool and comfortable fit.

The brand has been modeled by popular UAAP collegiate basketball players, including JC Intal of the Ateneo de Manila Blue Eagles, Ryan Arana, PJ Philidema, UAAP Season 67 Rookie of the Year JV Casio of the De La Salle Green Archers, Jerome Gadiane and Francis Barcellano of the FEU Tamaraws, and Star Bolts Mun Gordoro, Jeff Bordero and Vic Velasco.

Ducks Unlimited items are located at Rustan's Cubao, Rustan's Fairview, Cherry's 3, Robinson's Place Ermita, Robinson's Galleria, Landmark, Shoppersville Greenhills, Alt. Mall, SM Cubao and Festival Mall Alabang.

SVC's live performances are always a treat.

All-natural sound

By Jonathan Ong
Philstar.com

Nearly a decade after Sam Valley Crew's self-titled debut album was released, SVC continues to enhance and elevate local hiphop music (consisting of an all-new, all-independent cast of talented artists) with their latest album, aptly called "It's All Natural."

Recently recorded at Cebu's Makoa, "It's All Natural" exhibition hiphop as we know it in the Philippines. All throughout their performance, the live band as well as the three emcees (Bye, Eli-J and Abbas), who doubled as the band's loyal hype crew, kept the energy level high and interacting.

Most fans you'll see in local hiphop or rap, watching Sam Valley Crew perform live was a treat. The whole of Cubao was held under SVC's spell for the hour or so that they played their music.

The first single, "The Real Hip Hop Music," is a definitive statement, letting everyone know just what the new album is all about. With an impressive and surprising lineup of featured artists and instrumentalists in back them up, ranging from Moog of Chicosci and Junior of the Mobb Deep to Rapid 9 Collaboration tenors at Raimund Marasigan), Sam Valley Crew's first independent effort reflects forerunners with a distinctive and original groove.

The album is easy on the ears and definitely easy on the mind. It's the type of music you can listen to for relaxation or for deep thinking. The combination of good lyrics and good instrumentals is seamless, and the "live band" vibe is perfectly executed.

Notable tracks include the rock-influenced "Rockin' It," "Play" (featuring Radikal) and "Storm on Rolling." Even the first song on the list, "Let's Go," is a long listen at 39 tracks). "It's All Natural" will have you nodding your head to the music from these emcees from the south.

Sam Valley Crew may be reached at www.soundclick.com/svc2004@yahoo.com

Look Ma, no dial-up connection

By Mike Mark M. Sabio
Philstar.com

HAVE you ever wrenched your wallet into a wound with endless rapid pops and hoop capers? Have your face pressed your white while waiting for your PC to log on to the world? Have you ever missed life-altering phone calls because of your supreme surfing addiction?

If you answered an exclamation point punctuated "Yes" to one of the above questions (or worse, all of them) and are still suffering from hoop capers and super slow Internet connection, then Globelines DSL is the Internet connection gift Santa failed to give you this year.

DSL, a.k.a. digital subscriber line, is a high-speed transmission technology commonly known as broadband. Using existing telephone lines, it delivers download speeds several times faster than regular dial-up services. It also makes using the telephone and surfing the Internet at the same time possible.

Bayan Communications, a wholly owned subsidiary of Globe Telecom, offers DSL as telephone subscribers through Globelines, the landline telephone service of Globe Telecom.

Globelines started rolling out its DSL service in the country two years ago. It was introduced in Manila in 2002 and in Cebu a year later. Globelines DSL has also reached the island destinations of Boracay and Tagbilaran.

And wired coverage is left behind? With great perks and promising party music, Globelines also brought its DSL service to Davo with a launch hosted by Jill Rodriguez. The event was held at Filby's and featured a free-style presentation, a short (supposedly) commercial and a band performance.

Jose Antonio V. Magno, Jr., consumer marketing head, had nothing but good words for the place. "We can see and really love spunky Boracay is advancing and we're very happy and very proud to be part of that," he said. "Globelines is really committed to provide high-quality telecommunications service and Internet service to this island. We have a lot of love for this island."

SVEN!! host Jill Rodriguez, Globe PR specialist Allyn Cuenca, Globe PR manager for Visayas-Manila Honeylet Dalisi, the author, Candy Pangilinan and Globelines senior product manager Regie Bito

High-speed edge

Globelines DSL's edge among other home Internet service providers is its high speed – up to 384 kilobytes per second (as opposed to others' 128 or at best 256 kbps). It is simply the fastest Internet connection in the Philippines at this time.

That means no unbearable waiting at that like percentage bar while waiting for a big bunch of file (from cheerleaders to Bible maps while your PC goes for some serious downloading.

And since Globelines DSL provides a special link, anytime that is plugged into your phone line, you can dial all you want and be assured that Globelines Internet will still still get through.

Another amazing aspect of the Globelines DSL is that once you are connected, you'll always be connected. It is always on, the jazz have to log on. No need to dial up and be disappointed while there does says "Sky speeds or the line is busy" or something like that.

Yet another advantage of the service is its one-bill convenience. A separate bill for your DSL is unnecessary because you see just see your Globe bill.

As part of your installation fee, you will get a DSL modem, which is needed to connect to the Internet using the DSL line. Of course, a Globelines line is a prerequisite.

Existing Globelines subscribers may just add the DSL to their plans. For non-subscribers, the Globelines telephone and the Internet connection will be given during the installation.

Globelines DSL has two plans available. Plan 1500 offers 40 hours of use per month; every minute for great days costs P1. Plan 1999 offers unlimited access to the wonderful world of the Internet.

As a special treat for the work-weary boys and girls of Davo, an open house was given for free to those who availed of the packages during the launch.

E-mail the author at mail.sabio_jillm@yahoo.com

MEGA YDC finalist Ferdinand Abuel side by side with his work of art

GIAN Romano with his vintage creation

FINALIST Catherine Cavilte and her eclectic design

FULL shot of Jeffrey Rogador's creation

Juicy-licious fashion

PINK is the new pink. 23 is the new 21. Vintage is the new modern. Such is the never-ending cycle of trends this crazy side of town.

Whether you prefer to trend-set, trend-spot or trend-snub is up to you. Whichever way, the city is rife with possibilities no matter which direction you take.

Tomorrow, fashion gets "re-fashioned" as Mega turns the table to feature the works of young designers, taking inspiration from Iolo's hoard of beautiful clothes, which they "re-fashion" to meet the contemporary needs of the girl next door via the Mega Young Designers Competition (YDC).

My friends often frequent Rainbow Bazaar (the *ukay-ukay* of the chi-chi set) and score out designer gowns donated by society matrons for charity.

Shu Uemura's **Tina Tinio** has picked up dresses by **Joe Salazar, Ramon Valera** and gowns owned by grand dame Chito Madrigal. (I got myself army jackets with **Joe de Venecia** name plates.)

She will then have designer **Tina Daniac** re-adjust it to her size, make it into a mini, tear out a sleeve—and voila! A whole new designer wardrobe is born. Accessorize, put on a stylish 'do, spray a light scent, put up the right attitude and you'll look like a million bucks.

At the Premier THX Cinema, up-and-coming design superstars **Aztec Barba, Catherine Cavilte, Donn Delantar, Ferdinand Abuel, Gian Romano** and **Jeffrey Rogador** will showcase their creative vintage innovations. From bear-inspired designs, origami and '80s bridesmaid dresses, to deconstructed barongs and old country fashion, these designers will show how creative they are refashioning fashion.

The pressure is on them, yes. But pressure can be a good thing, especially since Mega YDC has produced fashion stars like **Rajo Laurel, Michi Calica** and **Patrice Ramos-Diaz**.

And by the way, the British Council is bringing the winner to London for a study grant. We will all find out tomorrow who the lucky one will be.

Lip-smacking good

A couple of weeks back at Temple, ladies lip-locked with their favorite glossy smacker.

Pink, pink and everything pink adorned the Greenbelt 2 hallway with a giant facade that read, "Are U Juicy Enough?" Lancôme's **Sam Yen** and **Rhea de Vera** hosted cocktails outside as guests feasted on pink-colored cocktails to launch the latest flavors of Juicy Tubes.

Lancôme chief makeup artist Sam Yen has been going around the campuses spreading the gospel of glossy lips via Juicy Tubes. "It's been getting great response from college girls—check their bags, and chances are, it's there."

Inside Temple, I was decked in Juici-licious pink, with two Juicy girls fanning me as I introduced the new Juicy flavors (lychee, melon, strawberry, peach and watermelon) and the women who represent them.

Chesca Yupangco is a student by day and a photographer by night. **Kate Torralba**, as we all know, is a designer and musician. **Abby Co** is a brand manager for L'Oreal fragrances and makeup artist after office hours. **Paola Vega** is a ballet dancer during the day; at night she shifts to Beyonce mode and invades the R&B clubs.

Later, these women who lead multiple lives partied with like-minded folk who epitomized the new version of work hard and play hard—indulge, indulge! To borrow the phrase from the chewing gum ad, "Times like these, you need a juicy!"

Yaparazzi!

Tim Yap

FINALIST Donn Camilo Delantar takes pride in his design.

SHOW director Robbie Carmona with Joey@92.3's Ria Romero

JUICY IT. Tall and pretty Sarah Meier sizzles at Temple.

AZTEC Barba's reinvention of the barong: vintage embroidered pattern on blouse, and skirt densely patterned with just cutouts

TEMPLE TATTLE. Marc Nelson at the Juicy Tubes launch

JUICY FRUITS. Zsa Zsa Padilla with daughter Karylle

L'OREAL LUXE. Cessie Colayco, ETC's Angelica Belasa and Cris Golamco

GLOSSY lips with Juicy Tubes

GOT JUICE? Abby Cruz asks guests, "Are you juicy enough?"

JUICY GROUP. Chesca Yupangco, Paola Vega, Kate Torralba with Yaparazzi

LUSTING FOR LANCÔME. Sam Yen, Rhea de Vera and Abby Co